CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER

CONFESSIONS

OF AN

ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER

ALSO THE

LIVES OF

SHAKESPEARE AND GOETHE

BY

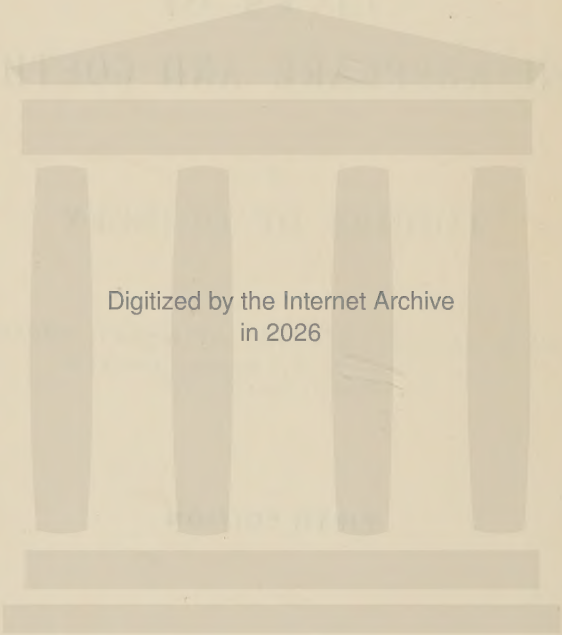
THOMAS DE QUINCEY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY HENRY MORLEY

LL.D, LATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AT
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON

FIFTH EDITION

LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS, LIMITED
BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL
1901



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/confessionsofeng0000thom_n4e4

INTRODUCTION.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY was born on August 15, 1785, in Greenhays, a suburb of Manchester. He was the fifth child of a Manchester merchant who traded with America and the West Indies. He inherited a delicate and nervous constitution. His father, long absent in warmer climates, came home to die of consumption at the age of thirty-nine. Thomas De Quincey then was only seven years old. The division of the father's property secured to each of the boys a sum yielding £150 a year.

From a school at Salford Thomas De Quincey, at the age of eleven, was sent to the Bath Grammar School, where he was famous for his Latin verse, and at fifteen could not only write lyric verse in Greek, but also talk Greek fluently. "That boy," he heard one of the masters say of him to a stranger, "could harangue an Athenian mob better than you or I could address an English one." He highly approved of the master who had this opinion of him, but he was a nervous boy, morbidly sensitive and self-conscious. He went home ill of a box on the ears. His mother nursed him, removed him from the Bath school, had him taught at home for a time, and then sent him to a school at Winkfield for a year. As a boy of fifteen he then went with a boy friend, Lord Westport, son of an Irish Earl, to Ireland; and had what he called a revelation, from the admiration he conceived for a "fine young woman of twenty." When he came back from Ireland he aspired to go at once to Oxford, but his guardians resolved that he should increase his means for college education by spending three years at the Manchester Grammar School, since by so doing he could secure a scholarship of £50 a year for some years.

De Quincey went to school again unwillingly, continually pleaded for release, sent to his mother a list of his miseries, and when this proved ineffectual, ran away. He hovered about his mother's home at the Priory, in Chester, on his way to Wales, hoping to see a sister, was observed and brought in, but by the advice of his mother's brother, Colonel Penson, an Indian officer then home on furlough, he was allowed to go on his ramble in Wales, receiving a guinea a week as long as he corresponded with his guardians. Very soon he ceased to correspond, and found his way to London in the way described in his "Confessions."

Back at last in Chester, where his uncle was still at the Priory, De

Quincey then agreed to go to Worcester College, Oxford, upon an allowance of £100 a year; for his guardians refused more than the sum that would have maintained him had he remained, as first appointed, at the Grammar School.

At Oxford De Quincey continued his German studies, to which the first impulse had been given by one of the friends he had made when wandering in Wales. He found at Oxford a German, with whom he studied Hebrew; he fastened on the early poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge; and lived much in seclusion, although known for the rare charm of his flow of talk. He made occasional visits to London or to friends in Lancashire.

In 1804, his second year at College, De Quincey, suffering from neuralgia, met a friend in London who recommended opium for relief, and bought his first dose of the "beatific chemist" in Oxford Street. In the year after he had come of age, he gave secretly, through Joseph Cottle, £300 from his little capital to relieve the wants of Coleridge, whose receipt ran: "November 12, 1807. Received from Mr. Joseph Cottle the sum of three hundred pounds, presented to me, through him, by an unknown friend." De Quincey had made the acquaintance of both Coleridge and Wordsworth. At the close of 1808 he went to stay with Wordsworth at Grasmere, and made arrangements for taking a lease of the cottage which had been Wordsworth's first home there, and from which Wordsworth had lately moved into a house more suited to his growing family. In 1809 De Quincey was in London, seeing through the press Wordsworth's carefully written pamphlet on "the Convention of Cintra," and making what the poet himself recognized as happy emendations while he read the proofs. In November he took possession of the cottage, the furnishing of which had been under the superintendence of Wordsworth's sister Dorothy; and that was De Quincey's home for the next twenty-seven years of his life.

The kindliness of De Quincey's nature is shown in the fact that he was regarded as their "Kinsey," and a very close friend, by all Wordsworth's little children. In 1809 he found a new comrade in John Wilson, afterwards known as the "Christopher North" of *Blackwood's Magazine*. Wilson and De Quincey had been at Oxford together, without acquaintance at the time. Wilson left college, and settled at Elleray, by Lake Windermere, happy in a vigorous health and a fortune of thirty thousand pounds: but happier, some years later, in the loss of the fortune; for it was that loss which brought his energies into full play. From 1809, Wilson, the tall vigorous athlete, with health in every movement of his body or his mind, a man who could jump twelve yards in three jumps with a heavy stone in each hand, became companion in rambles with De Quincey, who was of under height and slender of frame, with a mind morbidly sensitive, not made the healthier by use of opium. The friendship between Thomas De Quincey and John Wilson was lifelong. Each loved the poets, each had his own touch of the sacred fire, and the likeness in essentials was accompanied with the complete unlikeness in accidents of character that fills one friend's life with ever-fresh matter of study and enjoyment for the other, and so doubles the experience of each.

In 1813, De Quincey's little fortune was made less by the failure of a

business house in which some part of it had been invested. In the winter of 1814–15 he was with his friend Wilson in Edinburgh, where his silver stream of talk charmed all who heard it. "His voice," said one who met him then, "was extraordinary; it came as if from dreamland; but it was the most musical and impressive of voices. Seeing he was always good-natured and social, he could take part in any sort of tattle, but his musical cadences were not in keeping with such work, and in a few minutes (not without some strictly logical sequence) he could escape at will from beeves to butterflies, and thence to the soul's immortality, to Plato, and Kant, and Schelling, and Fichte; would recount profound mysteries from his own experiences—visions that had come over him in his loneliest walks among the mountains. And whatever the subject might be, every one of his sentences was woven into the most perfect logical texture, and uttered in a tone of sustained melody." He was then taking opium at the rate of 340 grains a day; but with marriage in view he gradually reduced the dose from 340 grains to forty. In 1816 De Quincey married Margaret Simpson, daughter of a Westmoreland farmer, and was happy for a time; but in the middle of 1817 and in 1818 he suffered again the pains of opium. In 1819, the necessity of earning by use of his pen made him editor of the *Westmoreland Gazette* at a salary of a guinea a week. He was also able to earn by writing for *Blackwood's Magazine* and for the *Quarterly Review*. It was possible, as he told his uncle, Colonel Penson, to make an income from all sources of £260 a year.

Children were born. Troubles again deepened. De Quincey added to his difficulties by rash liberalities that, in 1821, had melted away nearly all his capital. In the summer of 1821 he was in London, endeavouring to find engagements as a writer; and in the autumn of that year he wrote the greater part of his *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*. It was Charles Lamb who sought to cheer his London solitude, and introduced him to Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, who had just come into possession of *The London Magazine*, for which Charles Lamb was then writing. The *Confessions* were written in a little back room at No. 4 York Street, Covent Garden, where De Quincey was then lodging. They are here given in their original form, as they were published in *The London Magazine*, and republished in a volume in 1823. The third part was first published in the volume, and reprinted from it in this Magazine.

In 1823 and 1824, De Quincey, while in London, again fell under the influence of opium. He was in debt also—partly for this reason absent from his home in Westmoreland—and he wrote to Charles Knight at the end of 1825: "Anxiety, long continued with me of late years, in consequence of my opium-shattering, seizes on some frail part about the stomach, and produces a specific complaint which very soon abolishes all power of thinking at all." His nervous temperament exaggerated trouble. John Wilson said of his friend: "If De Quincey owed a five-pound note and were unable to pay it, it would vex him more than debts of thousands would vex many other men rolling about in their carriages."

John Wilson came to the aid of his friend by attaching him more closely to *Blackwood's Magazine*, where he began, in November 1826, a series of papers on German Prose Writers. By this and other ties De Quincey was

drawn gradually towards Edinburgh as his field of labour; and in 1830 he was joined there by his wife and family. *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* became another source of income to De Quincey. It was to *Tait's Magazine* that he began to contribute in 1834 his Autobiographic Sketches.

He was thus in full activity when, among other work, he wrote a few biographical articles for the seventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which included the lives of Shakespeare and Goethe, here reprinted. Of the Life of Shakespeare a writer in *Fraser's Magazine* for July 1841 said that, having read all the accounts of Shakespeare he could find, the last found was "one by that curiously meditative and subtle spirit, Thomas De Quincey, who has thrust an admirable and ingenious memoir into a grave and ponderous work, where it shines among treatises on the senses, serpents, and ship-building. The Opium-Eater must be a new man. The dreamy languor of his former state must have passed away. . . . . The narrative, of course, is merely a few facts—a slender thread on which to hang a string of pearls."

But there were griefs that had laid the Opium-Eater open to the old temptation. His youngest son had died in 1833; his eldest son died in 1835. His wife died in 1837, and after this last date there were relapses into use of opium with seasons of extreme distress, until the close of 1844. From that time he reduced his allowance to six grains a day, and in his latter years De Quincey's life passed peacefully, free wholly from distress of mind. Two of his sons were in the army, another studied medicine; his three daughters were good angels in his home, and the eldest took from him all business cares.

In 1855, De Quincey greatly enlarged and partly re-wrote the *Confessions* for a collected edition of his works; but when writing of it to one of his daughters he said: "To justify the enormous labour it has cost me, most certainly it *ought* to be improved. And yet reviewing the volume as a *whole*, now that I can look back from nearly the end to the beginning, greatly I doubt whether many readers will not prefer it in its original fragmentary state to its present full-blown development." There is no doubt of that among the readers.

Thomas De Quincey died on December 8, 1859, in his seventy-fifth year.

H. M.

February 1886.

CONFESSIONS

OF AN

ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER.

CONFESSIONS

OF AN

ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER:

BEING AN EXTRACT FROM THE
LIFE OF A SCHOLAR.

From the "London Magazine" for September 1821.

TO THE READER.

I HERE present you, courteous reader, with the record of a remarkable period in my life: according to my application of it, I trust that it will prove not merely an interesting record, but in a considerable degree useful and instructive. In *that* hope it is that I have drawn it up; and *that* must be my apology for breaking through that delicate and honourable reserve which, for the most part, restrains us from the public exposure of our own errors and infirmities. Nothing, indeed, is more revolting to English feelings than the spectacle of a human being obtruding on our notice his moral ulcers or scars, and tearing away that "decent drapery" which time or indulgence to human

frailty may have drawn over them; accordingly, the greater part of *our* confessions (that is, spontaneous and extra-judicial confessions) proceed from demireps, adventurers, or swindlers: and for any such acts of gratuitous self-humiliation from those who can be supposed in sympathy with the decent and self-respecting part of society, we must look to French literature, or to that part of the German which is tainted with the spurious and defective sensibility of the French. All this I feel so forcibly, and so nervously am I alive to reproach of this tendency, that I have for many months hesitated about the propriety of allowing this or any part of my narrative to come before the public eye until after my death (when, for many reasons, the whole will be published); and it is not without an anxious review of the reasons for and against this step that I have at last concluded on taking it.

Guilt and misery shrink, by a natural instinct, from public notice: they court privacy and solitude: and even in their choice of a grave will sometimes sequester themselves from the general population of the churchyard, as if declining to claim fellowship with the great family of man, and wishing (in the affecting language of Mr. Wordsworth)

> Humbly to express
> A penitential loneliness.

It is well, upon the whole, and for the interest of us all, that it should be so: nor would I willingly in my own person manifest a disregard of such salutary feelings, nor in act or word do anything to weaken

them ; but, on the one hand, as my self-accusation does not amount to a confession of guilt, so, on the other, it is possible that, if it *did*, the benefit resulting to others from the record of an experience purchased at so heavy a price might compensate, by a vast overbalance, for any violence done to the feelings I have noticed, and justify a breach of the general rule. Infirmity and misery do not of necessity imply guilt. They approach or recede from shades of that dark alliance, in proportion to the probable motives and prospects of the offender, and the palliations, known or secret, of the offence ; in proportion as the temptations to it were potent from the first, and the resistance to it, in act or in effort, was earnest to the last. For my own part, without breach of truth or modesty, I may affirm that my life has been, on the whole, the life of a philosopher : from my birth I was made an intellectual creature, and intellectual in the highest sense my pursuits and pleasures have been, even from my schoolboy days. If opium-eating be a sensual pleasure, and if I am bound to confess that I have indulged in it to an excess not yet *recorded* * of any other man, it is no less true that I have struggled against this fascinating enthralment with a religious zeal, and have at length accomplished what I never yet heard attributed to any other man — have untwisted, almost to its final links, the accursed chain which fettered me. Such a self-conquest may

* "Not yet *recorded*," I say ; for there is one celebrated man of the present day, who, if all be true which is reported of him, has greatly exceeded me in quantity.

reasonably be set off in counterbalance to any kind or degree of self-indulgence. Not to insist that in my case the self-conquest was unquestionable, the self-indulgence open to doubts of casuistry, according as that name shall be extended to acts aiming at the bare relief of pain, or shall be restricted to such as aim at the excitement of positive pleasure.

Guilt, therefore, I do not acknowledge ; and if I did, it is possible that I might still resolve on the present act of confession in consideration of the service which I may thereby render to the whole class of opium-eaters. But who are they ? Reader, I am sorry to say a very numerous class indeed. Of this I became convinced some years ago by computing at that time the number of those in one small class of English society (the class of men distinguished for talents, or of eminent station) who were known to me, directly or indirectly, as opium-eaters ; such, for instance, as the eloquent and benevolent ——, the late Dean of ——, Lord ——, Mr. —— the philosopher, a late Under-Secretary of State (who described to me the sensation which first drove him to the use of opium in the very same words as the Dean of ——, viz., "that he felt as though rats were gnawing and abrading the coats of his stomach"), Mr. ——, and many others hardly less known, whom it would be tedious to mention. Now, if one class, comparatively so limited, could furnish so many scores of cases (and *that* within the knowledge of one single inquirer), it was a natural inference that the entire population of England would furnish a proportionable number. The soundness of

this inference, however, I doubted, until some facts became known to me which satisfied me that it was not incorrect. I will mention two. (1) Three respectable London druggists, in widely remote quarters of London, from whom I happened lately to be purchasing small quantities of opium, assured me that the number of *amateur* opium-eaters (as I may term them) was at this time immense; and that the difficulty of distinguishing those persons to whom habit had rendered opium necessary from such as were purchasing it with a view to suicide, occasioned them daily trouble and disputes. This evidence respected London only. But (2)—which will possibly surprise the reader more—some years ago, on passing through Manchester, I was informed by several cotton manufacturers that their workpeople were rapidly getting into the practice of opium-eating; so much so, that on a Saturday afternoon the counters of the druggists were strewed with pills of one, two, or three grains, in preparation for the known demand of the evening. The immediate occasion of this practice was the lowness of wages, which at that time would not allow them to indulge in ale or spirits, and wages rising, it may be thought that this practice would cease; but as I do not readily believe that any man having once tasted the divine luxuries of opium will afterwards descend to the gross and mortal enjoyments of alcohol, I take it for granted

> That those eat now who never ate before;
> And those who always ate, now eat the more.

Indeed, the fascinating powers of opium are ad-

mitted even by medical writers, who are its greatest enemies. Thus, for instance, Awsiter, apothecary to Greenwich Hospital, in his "Essay on the Effects of Opium" (published in the year 1763), when attempting to explain why Mead had not been sufficiently explicit on the properties, counteragents, &c., of this drug, expresses himself in the following mysterious terms (*φωναντα συνετοισι*): "Perhaps he thought the subject of too delicate a nature to be made common; and as many people might then indiscriminately use it, it would take from that necessary fear and caution which should prevent their experiencing the extensive power of this drug, *for there are many properties in it, if universally known, that would habituate the use, and make it more in request with us than with Turks themselves;* the result of which knowledge," he adds, "must prove a general misfortune." In the necessity of this conclusion I do not altogether concur; but upon that point I shall have occasion to speak at the close of my Confessions, where I shall present the reader with the *moral* of my narrative.

PRELIMINARY CONFESSIONS.

These preliminary confessions, or introductory narrative of the youthful adventures which laid the foundation of the writer's habit of opium-eating in after-life, it has been judged proper to premise, for three several reasons:

1. As forestalling that question, and giving it a satisfactory answer, which else would painfully obtrude itself in the course of the Opium Confessions—"How came any reasonable being to subject himself to such a yoke of misery; voluntarily to incur a captivity so servile, and knowingly to fetter himself with such a sevenfold chain?"—a question which, if not somewhere plausibly resolved, could hardly fail, by the indignation which it would be apt to raise as against an act of wanton folly, to interfere with that degree of sympathy which is necessary in any case to an author's purposes.

2. As furnishing a key to some parts of that tremendous scenery which afterwards peopled the dreams of the Opium-eater.

3. As creating some previous interest of a personal sort in the confessing subject, apart from the matter of the confessions, which cannot fail to render the confessions themselves more interesting. If a man "whose talk is of oxen" should become an opium-eater, the probability is that (if he is not too dull to dream at all) he will dream about oxen; whereas, in the case before him, the reader will find that the Opium-eater boasteth himself to be a philosopher;

and accordingly, that the phantasmagoria of *his* dreams (waking or sleeping, day-dreams or night-dreams) is suitable to one who in that character

Humani nihil a se alienum putat.

For amongst the conditions which he deems indispensable to the sustaining of any claim to the title of philosopher is not merely the possession of a superb intellect in its *analytic* functions (in which part of the pretensions, however, England can for some generations show but few claimants; at least, he is not aware of any known candidate for this honour who can be styled emphatically *a subtle thinker*, with the exception of *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, and in a narrower department of thought with the recent illustrious exception* of *David Ricardo*) but also on such a constitution of the *moral* faculties as shall give him an inner eye and power of intuition for the vision and the mysteries of our human nature: *that* constitution of faculties, in short, which

* A third exception might perhaps have been added; and my reason for not adding that exception is chiefly because it was only in his juvenile efforts that the writer whom I allude to expressly addressed himself to philosophical themes; his riper powers having been all dedicated (on very excusable and very intelligible grounds, under the present direction of the popular mind in England) to criticism and the Fine Arts. This reason apart, however, I doubt whether he is not rather to be considered an acute thinker than a subtle one. It is, besides, a great drawback on his mastery over philosophical subjects that he has obviously not had the advantage of a regular scholastic education: he has not read Plato in his youth (which most likely was only his misfortune), but neither has he read Kant in his manhood (which is his fault).

(amongst all the generations of men that from the beginning of time have deployed into life, as it were, upon this planet) our English poets have possessed in the highest degree, and Scottish professors* in the lowest.

I have often been asked how I first came to be a regular opium-eater, and have suffered, very unjustly, in the opinion of my acquaintance from being reputed to have brought upon myself all the sufferings which I shall have to record, by a long course of indulgence in this practice purely for the sake of creating an artificial state of pleasurable excitement. This, however, is a misrepresentation of my case. True it is that for nearly ten years I did occasionally take opium for the sake of the exquisite pleasure it gave me ; but so long as I took it with this view I was effectually protected from all material bad consequences by the necessity of interposing long intervals between the several acts of indulgence, in order to renew the pleasurable sensations. It was not for the purpose of creating pleasure, but of mitigating pain in the severest degree, that I first began to use opium as an article of daily diet. In the twenty-eighth year of my age a most painful affection of the stomach, which I had first experienced about ten years before, attacked me in great strength. This affection had originally been caused by extremities of hunger, suffered in my boyish days. During the season of hope and redundant happiness which succeeded (that is, from eighteen to twenty-four) it

* I disclaim any allusion to *existing* professors, of whom indeed I know only one.

had slumbered ; for the three following years it had revived at intervals ; and now, under unfavourable circumstances, from depression of spirits, it attacked me with a violence that yielded to no remedies but opium. As the youthful sufferings which first produced this derangement of the stomach were interesting in themselves, and in the circumstances that attended them, I shall here briefly retrace them.

My father died when I was about seven years old, and left me to the care of four guardians. I was sent to various schools, great and small ; and was very early distinguished for my classical attainments, especially for my knowledge of Greek. At thirteen I wrote Greek with ease ; and at fifteen my command of that language was so great that I not only composed Greek verses in lyric metres, but could converse in Greek fluently and without embarrassment—an accomplishment which I have not since met with in any scholar of my times, and which in my case was owing to the practice of daily reading off the newspapers into the best Greek I could furnish *extempore ;* for the necessity of ransacking my memory and invention for all sorts and combinations of periphrastic expressions as equivalents for modern ideas, images, relations of things, &c., gave me a compass of diction which would never have been called out by a dull translation of moral essays, &c. "That boy," said one of my masters, pointing the attention of a stranger to me, "that boy could harangue an Athenian mob better than you and I could address an English one." He who honoured me with this eulogy was a scholar, "and a ripe and a good one,"

and of all my tutors was the only one whom I loved or reverenced. Unfortunately for me (and, as I afterwards learned, to this worthy man's great indignation), I was transferred to the care, first of a blockhead, who was in a perpetual panic lest I should expose his ignorance; and finally to that of a respectable scholar at the head of a great school on an ancient foundation. This man had been appointed to his situation by —— College, Oxford, and was a sound, well-built scholar, but (like most men whom I have known from that college) coarse, clumsy, and inelegant. A miserable contrast he presented, in my eyes, to the Etonian brilliancy of my favourite master; and beside, he could not disguise from my hourly notice the poverty and meagreness of his understanding. It is a bad thing for a boy to be and to know himself far beyond his tutors, whether in knowledge or in power of mind. This was the case, so far as regarded knowledge at least, not with myself only, for the two boys, who jointly with myself composed the first form, were better Grecians than the head-master, though not more elegant scholars, nor at all more accustomed to sacrifice to to the Graces. When I first entered I remember that we read Sophocles; and it was a constant matter of triumph to us, the learned triumvirate of the first form, to see our "Archididascalus" (as he loved to be called) conning our lessons before we went up, and laying a regular train, with lexicon and grammar, for blowing up and blasting (as it were) any difficulties he found in the choruses; whilst *we* never condescended to open our

books until the moment of going up, and were generally employed in writing epigrams upon his wig or some such important matter. My two class-fellows were poor, and dependent for their future prospects at the university on the recommendation of the head-master; but I, who had a small patrimonial property, the income of which was sufficient to support me at college, wished to be sent thither immediately. I made earnest representations on the subject to my guardians, but all to no purpose. One, who was more reasonable and had more knowledge of the world than the rest, lived at a distance; two of the other three resigned all their authority into the hands of the fourth; and this fourth, with whom I had to negotiate, was a worthy man in his way, but haughty, obstinate, and intolerant of all opposition to his will. After a certain number of letters and personal interviews, I found that I had nothing to hope for, not even a compromise of the matter, from my guardian. Unconditional submission was what he demanded, and I prepared myself, therefore, for other measures. Summer was now coming on with hasty steps, and my seventeenth birthday was fast approaching, after which day I had sworn within myself that I would no longer be numbered amongst schoolboys. Money being what I chiefly wanted, I wrote to a woman of high rank, who, though young herself, had known me from a child, and had latterly treated me with great distinction, requesting that she would "lend" me five guineas. For upwards of a week no answer came, and I was beginning to despond, when at length a servant put into my

hands a double letter with a coronet on the seal. The letter was kind and obliging. The fair writer was on the sea-coast, and in that way the delay had arisen; she enclosed double of what I had asked, and good-naturedly hinted that if I should *never* repay her, it would not absolutely ruin her. Now, then, I was prepared for my scheme. Ten guineas, added to about two which I had remaining from my pocket-money, seemed to me sufficient for an indefinite length of time; and at that happy age, if no *definite* boundary can be assigned to one's power, the spirit of hope and pleasure makes it virtually infinite.

It is a just remark of Dr. Johnson's (and, what cannot often be said of his remarks, it is a very feeling one), that we never do anything consciously for the last time (of things, that is, which we have long been in the habit of doing) without sadness of heart. This truth I felt deeply when I came to leave ——, a place which I did not love, and where I had not been happy. On the evening before I left —— for ever, I grieved when the ancient and lofty schoolroom resounded with the evening service, performed for the last time in my hearing; and at night, when the muster-roll of names was called over, and mine (as usual) was called first, I stepped forward, and passing the head-master, who was standing by, I bowed to him, and looked earnestly in his face, thinking to myself, "He is old and infirm, and in this world I shall not see him again." I was right; I never *did* see him again, nor ever shall. He looked at me complacently, smiled

good-naturedly, returned my salutation (or rather my valediction), and we parted (though he knew it not) for ever. I could not reverence him intellectually, but he had been uniformly kind to me, and had allowed me many indulgences ; and I grieved at the thought of the mortification I should inflict upon him.

The morning came which was to launch me into the world, and from which my whole succeeding life has in many important points taken its colouring. I lodged in the head-master's house, and had been allowed from my first entrance the indulgence of a private room, which I used both as a sleeping-room and as a study. At half after three I rose, and gazed with deep emotion at the ancient towers of ——, "drest in earliest light," and beginning to crimson with the radiant lustre of a cloudless July morning. I was firm and immovable in my purpose ; but yet agitated by anticipation of uncertain danger and troubles ; and if I could have foreseen the hurricane and perfect hail-storm of affliction which soon fell upon me, well might I have been agitated. To this agitation the deep peace of the morning presented an affecting contrast, and in some degree a medicine. The silence was more profound than that of midnight ; and to me the silence of a summer morning is more touching than all other silence, because, the light being broad and strong as that of noonday at other seasons of the year, it seems to differ from perfect day chiefly because man is not yet abroad ; and thus the peace of nature and of the innocent creatures of God seems to be secure and deep only

so long as the presence of man and his restless and unquiet spirit are not there to trouble its sanctity. I dressed myself, took my hat and gloves, and lingered a little in the room. For the last year and a half this room had been my "pensive citadel": here I had read and studied through all the hours of night, and though true it was that for the latter part of this time I, who was framed for love and gentle affections, had lost my gaiety and happiness during the strife and fever of contention with my guardian, yet, on the other hand, as a boy so passionately fond of books, and dedicated to intellectual pursuits, I could not fail to have enjoyed many happy hours in the midst of general dejection. I wept as I looked round on the chair, hearth, writing-table, and other familiar objects, knowing too certainly that I looked upon them for the last time. Whilst I write this it is eighteen years ago, and yet at this moment I see distinctly, as if it were yesterday, the lineaments and expression of the object on which I fixed my parting gaze. It was a picture of the lovely ——, which hung over the mantelpiece, the eyes and mouth of which were so beautiful, and the whole countenance so radiant with benignity and divine tranquillity, that I had a thousand times laid down my pen or my book to gather consolation from it, as a devotee from his patron saint. Whilst I was yet gazing upon it the deep tones of —— clock proclaimed that it was four o'clock. I went up to the picture, kissed it, and then gently walked out and closed the door for ever!

— — — — — — —

So blended and intertwisted in this life are occasions of laughter and of tears, that I cannot yet recall without smiling an incident which occurred at that time, and which had nearly put a stop to the immediate execution of my plan. I had a trunk of immense weight, for, besides my clothes, it contained nearly all my library. The difficulty was to get this removed to a carrier's : my room was at an aërial elevation in the house, and (what was worse) the staircase which communicated with this angle of the building was accessible only by a gallery, which passed the head-master's chamber door. I was a favourite with all the servants, and knowing that any of them would screen me and act confidentially, I communicated my embarrassment to a groom of the head-master's. The groom swore he would do anything I wished, and when the time arrived went upstairs to bring the trunk down. This I feared was beyond the strength of any one man ; however, the groom was a man

> Of Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear
> The weight of mightiest monarchies ;

and had a back as spacious as Salisbury Plain. Accordingly he persisted in bringing down the trunk alone, whilst I stood waiting at the foot of the last flight in anxiety for the event. For some time I heard him descending with slow and firm steps ; but unfortunately, from his trepidation, as he drew near the dangerous quarter, within a few steps of the gallery, his foot slipped, and the mighty burden falling from his shoulders, gained such increase of

impetus at each step of the descent, that on reaching the bottom it trundled, or rather leaped, right across, with the noise of twenty devils, against the very bedroom door of the Archididascalus. My first thought was that all was lost, and that my only chance for executing a retreat was to sacrifice my baggage. However, on reflection I determined to abide the issue. The groom was in the utmost alarm, both on his own account and on mine, but, in spite of this, so irresistibly had the sense of the ludicrous in this unhappy *contretemps* taken possession of his fancy, that he sang out a long, loud, and canorous peal of laughter, that might have wakened the Seven Sleepers. At the sound of this resonant merriment, within the very ears of insulted authority, I could not myself forbear joining in it; subdued to this, not so much by the unhappy *étourderie* of the trunk, as by the effect it had upon the groom. We both expected, as a matter of course, that Dr. —— would sally out of his room, for in general, if but a mouse stirred, he sprang out like a mastiff from his kennel. Strange to say, however, on this occasion, when the noise of laughter had ceased, no sound, or rustling even, was to be heard in the bedroom. Dr. —— had a painful complaint, which, sometimes keeping him awake, made his sleep perhaps, when it did come, the deeper. Gathering courage from the silence, the groom hoisted his burden again, and accomplished the remainder of his descent without accident. I waited until I saw the trunk placed on a wheelbarrow and on its road to the carrier's; then, "with Providence my guide," I

set off on foot, carrying a small parcel with some articles of dress under my arm; a favourite English poet in one pocket, and a small 12mo volume, containing about nine plays of Euripides, in the other.

It had been my intention originally to proceed to Westmoreland, both from the love I bore to that country and on other personal accounts. Accident, however, gave a different direction to my wanderings, and I bent my steps towards North Wales.

After wandering about for some time in Denbighshire, Merionethshire, and Carnarvonshire, I took lodgings in a small neat house in B——. Here I might have stayed with great comfort for many weeks, for provisions were cheap at B——, from the scarcity of other markets for the surplus produce of a wide agricultural district. An accident, however, in which perhaps no offence was designed, drove me out to wander again. I know not whether my reader may have remarked, but *I* have often remarked, that the proudest class of people in England (or at any rate the class whose pride is most apparent) are the families of bishops. Noblemen and their children carry about with them, in their very titles, a sufficient notification of their rank. Nay, their very names (and this applies also to the children of many untitled houses) are often, to the English ear, adequate exponents of high birth or descent. Sackville, Manners, Fitzroy, Paulet, Cavendish, and scores of others, tell their own tale. Such persons, therefore, find everywhere a due sense of their claims already established, except among

those who are ignorant of the world by virtue of their own obscurity: "Not to know *them*, argues one's self unknown." Their manners take a suitable tone and colouring, and for once they find it necessary to impress a sense of their consequence upon others, they meet with a thousand occasions for moderating and tempering this sense by acts of courteous condescension. With the families of bishops it is otherwise: with them it is all uphill work to make known their pretensions; for the proportion of the episcopal bench taken from noble families is not at any time very large, and the succession to these dignities is so rapid that the public ear seldom has time to become familiar with them, unless where they are connected with some literary reputation. Hence it is that the children of bishops carry about with them an austere and repulsive air, indicative of claims not generally acknowledged, a sort of *noli me tangere* manner, nervously apprehensive of too familiar approach, and shrinking with the sensitiveness of a gouty man from all contact with the οἱ πόλλοι. Doubtless, a powerful understanding, or unusual goodness of nature, will preserve a man from such weakness, but in general the truth of my representation will be acknowledged; pride, if not of deeper root in such families, appears at least more upon the surface of their manners. This spirit of manners naturally communicates itself to their domestics and other dependants. Now, my landlady had been a lady's maid or a nurse in the family of the Bishop of ——, and had but lately married away and

"settled" (as such people express it) for life. In a little town like B——, merely to have lived in the bishop's family conferred some distinction; and my good landlady had rather more than her share of the pride I have noticed on that score. What "my lord" said and what "my lord" did, how useful he was in Parliament and how indispensable at Oxford, formed the daily burden of her talk. All this I bore very well, for I was too good-natured to laugh in anybody's face, and I could make an ample allowance for the garrulity of an old servant. Of necessity, however, I must have appeared in her eyes very inadequately impressed with the bishop's importance, and, perhaps to punish me for my indifference, or possibly by accident, she one day repeated to me a conversation in which I was indirectly a party concerned. She had been to the palace to pay her respects to the family, and, dinner being over, was summoned into the dining-room. In giving an account of her household economy she happened to mention that she had let her apartments. Thereupon the good bishop (it seemed) had taken occasion to caution her as to her selection of inmates, "for," said he, "you must recollect, Betty, that this place is in the high road to the Head; so that multitudes of Irish swindlers running away from their debts into England, and of English swindlers running away from their debts to the Isle of Man, are likely to take this place in their route." This advice certainly was not without reasonable grounds, but rather fitted to be stored up for Mrs. Betty's private meditations than specially reported to me. What fol-

lowed, however, was somewhat worse. "Oh, my lord," answered my landlady (according to her own representation of the matter), "I really don't think this young gentleman is a swindler, because——" "You don't *think* me a swindler?" said I, interrupting her, in a tumult of indignation: "for the future I shall spare you the trouble of thinking about it." And without delay I prepared for my departure. Some concessions the good woman seemed disposed to make; but a harsh and contemptuous expression, which I fear that I applied to the learned dignitary himself, roused her indignation in turn, and reconciliation then became impossible. I was indeed greatly irritated at the bishop's having suggested any grounds of suspicion, however remotely, against a person whom he had never seen; and I thought of letting him know my mind in Greek, which, at the same time that it would furnish some presumption that I was no swindler, would also (I hoped) compel the bishop to reply in the same language; in which case I doubted not to make it appear that if I was not so rich as his lordship, I was a far better Grecian. Calmer thoughts, however, drove this boyish design out of my mind; for I considered that the bishop was in the right to counsel an old servant; that he could not have designed that his advice should be reported to me; and that the same coarseness of mind which had led Mrs. Betty to repeat the advice at all, might have coloured it in a way more agreeable to her own style of thinking than to the actual expressions of the worthy bishop.

I left the lodgings the very same hour, and this

turned out a very unfortunate occurrence for me, because, living henceforward at inns, I was drained of my money very rapidly. In a fortnight I was reduced to short allowance ; that is, I could allow myself only one meal a-day. From the keen appetite produced by constant exercise and mountain air, acting on a youthful stomach, I soon began to suffer greatly on this slender regimen, for the single meal which I could venture to order was coffee or tea. Even this, however, was at length withdrawn ; and afterwards, so long as I remained in Wales, I subsisted either on blackberries, hips, haws, &c., or on the casual hospitalities which I now and then received in return for such little services as I had an opportunty of rendering. Sometimes I wrote letters of business for cottagers who happened to have relatives in Liverpool or in London ; more often I wrote love-letters to their sweethearts for young women who had lived as servants at Shrewsbury or other towns on the English border. On all such occasions I gave great satisfaction to my humble friends, and was generally treated with hospitality ; and once in particular, near the village of Llan-y-styndw (or some such name), in a sequestered part of Merionethshire, I was entertained for upwards of three days by a family of young people with an affectionate and fraternal kindness that left an impression upon my heart not yet impaired. The family consisted at that time of four sisters and three brothers, all grown up, and all remarkable for elegance and delicacy of manners. So much beauty, and so much native good breeding and refinement, I do not remember to have seen before or since in any cottage,

except once or twice in Westmoreland and Devonshire. They spoke English, an accomplishment not often met with in so many members of one family, especially in villages remote from the high road. Here I wrote, on my first introduction, a letter about prize-money, for one of the brothers, who had served on board an English man-of-war; and, more privately, two love-letters for two of the sisters. They were both interesting-looking girls, and one of uncommon loveliness. In the midst of their confusion and blushes, whilst dictating, or rather giving me general instructions, it did not require any great penetration to discover that what they wished was that their letters should be as kind as was consistent with proper maidenly pride. I contrived so to temper my expressions as to reconcile the gratification of both feelings; and they were as much pleased with the way in which I had expressed their thoughts as (in their simplicity) they were astonished at my having so readily discovered them. The reception one meets with from the women of a family generally determines the tenor of one's whole entertainment. In this case I had discharged my confidential duties as secretary so much to the general satisfaction, perhaps also amusing them with my conversation, that I was pressed to stay with a cordiality which I had little inclination to resist. I slept with the brothers, the only unoccupied bed standing in the apartment of the young women; but in all other points they treated me with a respect not usually paid to purses as light as mine —as if my scholarship were sufficient evidence that

I was of "gentle blood." Thus I lived with them for three days and great part of a fourth; and, from the undiminished kindness which they continued to show me, I believe I might have stayed with them up to this time, if their power had corresponded with their wishes. On the last morning, however, I perceived upon their countenances, as they sate at breakfast, the expression of some unpleasant communication which was at hand; and soon after, one of the brothers explained to me that their parents had gone, the day before my arrival, to an annual meeting of Methodists, held at Carnarvon, and were that day expected to return; "and if they should not be so civil as they ought to be," he begged, on the part of all the young people, that I would not take it amiss. The parents returned with churlish faces, and "*Dym Sassenach*" (*no English*) in answer to all my addresses. I saw how matters stood; and so, taking an affectionate leave of my kind and interesting young hosts, I went my way; for, though they spoke warmly to their parents in my behalf, and often excused the manner of the old people by saying it was "only their way," yet I easily understood that my talent for writing love-letters would do as little to recommend me with two grave sexagenarian Welsh Methodists as my Greek sapphics or alcaics; and what had been hospitality when offered to me with the gracious courtesy of my young friends, would become charity when connected with the harsh demeanour of these old people. Certainly, Mr. Shelley is right in his notions about old age: unless

powerfully counteracted by all sorts of opposite agencies, it is a miserable corrupter and blighter to the genial charities of the human heart.

Soon after this I contrived, by means which I must omit for want of room, to transfer myself to London. And now began the latter and fiercer stage of my long sufferings; without using a disproportionate expression I might say, of my agony. For I now suffered, for upwards of sixteen weeks, the physical anguish of hunger in various degrees of intensity, but as bitter perhaps as ever any human being can have suffered who has survived it. I would not needlessly harass my reader's feelings by a detail of all that I endured; for extremities such as these, under any circumstances of heaviest misconduct or guilt, cannot be contemplated, even in description, without a rueful pity that is painful to the natural goodness of the human heart. Let it suffice, at least on this occasion, to say that a few fragments of bread from the breakfast-table of one individual (who supposed me to be ill, but did not know of my being in utter want), and these at uncertain intervals, constituted my whole support. During the former part of my sufferings (that is, generally in Wales, and always for the first two months in London) I was houseless, and very seldom slept under a roof. To this constant exposure to the open air I ascribe it mainly that I did not sink under my torments. Latterly, however, when colder and more inclement weather came on, and when, from the length of my sufferings, I had begun to sink into a more languishing condition, it was no

doubt fortunate for me that the same person to whose breakfast-table I had access, allowed me to sleep in a large unoccupied house of which he was tenant. Unoccupied I call it, for there was no household or establishment in it; nor any furniture, indeed, except a table and a few chairs. But I found, on taking possession of my new quarters, that the house already contained one single inmate, a poor friendless child, apparently ten years old; but she seemed hunger-bitten, and sufferings of that sort often make children look older than they are. From this forlorn child I learned that she had slept and lived there alone for some time before I came; and great joy the poor creature expressed when she found that I was in future to be her companion through the hours of darkness. The house was large, and, from the want of furniture, the noise of the rats made a prodigious echoing on the spacious staircase and hall; and amidst the real fleshly ills of cold and, I fear, hunger, the forsaken child had found leisure to suffer still more (it appeared) from the self-created one of ghosts. I promised her protection against all ghosts whatsoever, but alas! I could offer her no other assistance. We lay upon the floor, with a bundle of cursed law papers for a pillow, but with no other covering than a sort of large horseman's cloak; afterwards, however, we discovered in a garret an old sofa-cover, a small piece of rug, and some fragments of other articles, which added a little to our warmth. The poor child crept close to me for warmth, and for security against her ghostly enemies. When I was not more than

usually ill I took her into my arms, so that in general she was tolerably warm, and often slept when I could not, for during the last two months of my sufferings I slept much in daytime, and was apt to fall into transient dosings at all hours. But my sleep distressed me more than my watching, for beside the tumultuousness of my dreams (which were only not so awful as those which I shall have to describe hereafter as produced by opium), my sleep was never more than what is called *dog-sleep;* so that I could hear myself moaning, and was often, as it seemed to me, awakened suddenly by my own voice; and about this time a hideous sensation began to haunt me as soon as I fell into a slumber, which has since returned upon me at different periods of my life—viz., a sort of twitching (I know not where, but apparently about the region of the stomach) which compelled me violently to throw out my feet for the sake of relieving it. This sensation coming on as soon as I began to sleep, and the effort to relieve it constantly awaking me, at length I slept only from exhaustion; and from increasing weakness (as I said before) I was constantly falling asleep and constantly awaking. Meantime, the master of the house sometimes came in upon us suddenly, and very early; sometimes not till ten o'clock, sometimes not at all. He was in constant fear of bailiffs. Improving on the plan of Cromwell, every night he slept in a different quarter of London; and I observed that he never failed to examine through a private window the appearance of those who knocked at the door before he would allow it to be opened. He break-

fasted alone; indeed, his tea equipage would hardly have admitted of his hazarding an invitation to a second person, any more than the quantity of esculent *matéricl*, which for the most part was little more than a roll or a few biscuits which he had bought on his road from the place where he had slept. Or, if he *had* asked a party—as I once learnedly and facetiously observed to him—the several members of it must have *stood* in the relation to each other (not *sate* in any relation whatever) of succession, as the metaphysicians have it, and not of a co-existence; in the relation of the parts of time, and not of the parts of space. During his breakfast I generally contrived a reason for lounging in, and, with an air of as much indifference as I could assume, took up such fragments as he had left; sometimes, indeed, there were none at all. In doing this I committed no robbery except upon the man himself, who was thus obliged (I believe) now and then to send out at noon for an extra biscuit; for as to the poor child, *she* was never admitted into his study (if I may give that name to his chief depository of parchments, law writings, &c.); that room was to her the Bluebeard room of the house, being regularly locked on his departure to dinner, about six o'clock, which usually was his final departure for the night. Whether this child were an illegitimate daughter of Mr. ——, or only a servant, I could not ascertain; she did not herself know; but certainly she was treated altogether as a menial servant. No sooner did Mr. —— make his appearance than she went below stairs, brushed his shoes, coat, &c.; and, except when she was

summoned to run an errand, she never emerged from the dismal Tartarus of the kitchen, &c., to the upper air until my welcome knock at night called up her little trembling footsteps to the front door. Of her life during the daytime, however, I knew little but what I gathered from her own account at night, for as soon as the hours of business commenced I saw that my absence would be acceptable, and in general, therefore, I went off and sate in the parks or elsewhere until nightfall.

But who and what, meantime, was the master of the house himself? Reader, he was one of those anomalous practitioners in lower departments of the law who—what shall I say?—who on prudential reasons, or from necessity, deny themselves all indulgence in the luxury of too delicate a conscience (a periphrasis which might be abridged considerably, but *that* I leave to the reader's taste): in many walks of life a conscience is a more expensive encumbrance than a wife or a carriage; and just as people talk of "laying down" their carriages, so I suppose my friend Mr. —— had "laid down" his conscience for a time, meaning, doubtless, to resume it as soon as he could afford it. The inner economy of such a man's daily life would present a most strange picture, if I could allow myself to amuse the reader at his expense. Even with my limited opportunities for observing what went on, I saw many scenes of London intrigues and complex chicanery, "cycle and epicycle, orb in orb," at which I sometimes smile to this day, and at which I smiled then, in spite of my misery. My situation, however, at that time gave

me little experience in my own person of any qualities in Mr. ——'s character but such as did him honour; and of his whole strange composition I must forget everything but that towards me he was obliging, and to the extent of his power, generous.

That power was not, indeed, very extensive; however, in common with the rats, I sate rent free; and as Dr. Johnson has recorded that he never but once in his life had as much wall-fruit as he could eat, so let me be grateful that on that single occasion I had as large a choice of apartments in a London mansion as I could possibly desire. Except the Bluebeard room, which the poor child believed to be haunted, all others, from the attics to the cellars, were at our service; "the world was all before us," and we pitched our tent for the night in any spot we chose. This house I have already described as a large one; it stands in a conspicuous situation and in a well-known part of London. Many of my readers will have passed it, I doubt not, within a few hours of reading this. For myself, I never fail to visit it when business draws me to London; about ten o'clock this very night, August 15, 1821—being my birthday—I turned aside from my evening walk down Oxford Street, purposely to take a glance at it; it is now occupied by a respectable family, and by the lights in the front drawing-room I observed a domestic party assembled, perhaps at tea, and apparently cheerful and gay. Marvellous contrast, in my eyes, to the darkness, cold, silence, and desolation of that same house eighteen years ago, when its nightly occupants were one famishing scholar and a

neglected child. Her, by-the-bye, in after-years I vainly endeavoured to trace. Apart from her situation, she was not what would be called an interesting child ; she was neither pretty, nor quick in understanding, nor remarkably pleasing in manners. But, thank God ! even in those years I needed not the embellishments of novel accessories to conciliate my affections : plain human nature, in its humblest and most homely apparel, was enough for me, and I loved the child because she was my partner in wretchedness. If she is now living she is probably a mother, with children of her own ; but, as I have said, I could never trace her.

This I regret; but another person there was at that time whom I have since sought to trace with far deeper earnestness, and with far deeper sorrow at my failure. This person was a young woman, and one of that unhappy class who subsist upon the wages of prostitution. I feel no shame, nor have any reason to feel it, in avowing that I was then on familiar and friendly terms with many women in that unfortunate condition. The reader needs neither smile at this avowal nor frown ; for, not to remind my classical readers of the old Latin proverb, "*Sine cerere*," &c., it may well be supposed that in the existing state of my purse my connection with such women could not have been an impure one. But the truth is, that at no time of my life have I been a person to hold myself polluted by the touch or approach of any creature that wore a human shape ; on the contrary, from my very earliest youth it has been my pride to converse familiarly, *more Socratio*, with all human beings, man,

woman, and child, that chance might fling in my way; a practice which is friendly to the knowledge of human nature, to good feelings, and to that frankness of address which becomes a man who would be thought a philosopher. For a philosopher should not see with the eyes of the poor limitary creature calling himself a man of the world, and filled with narrow and self-regarding prejudices of birth and education, but should look upon himself as a catholic creature, and as standing in equal relation to high and low, to educated and uneducated, to the guilty and the innocent. Being myself at that time of necessity a peripatetic, or a walker of the streets, I naturally fell in more frequently with those female peripatetics who are technically called street-walkers. Many of these women had occasionally taken my part againt watchmen who wished to drive me off the steps of houses where I was sitting. But one amongst them, the one on whose account I have at all introduced this subject—yet no! let me not class the, oh! noble-minded Ann —— with that order of women. Let me find, if it be possible, some gentler name to designate the condition of her to whose bounty and compassion, ministering to my necessities when all the world had forsaken me, I owe it that I am at this time alive. For many weeks I had walked at nights with this poor friendless girl up and down Oxford Street, or had rested with her on steps and under the shelter of porticoes. She could not be so old as myself; she told me, indeed, that she had not completed her sixteenth year. By such questions as my interest about her prompted I had gradually drawn

forth her simple history. Hers was a case of ordinary occurrence (as I have since had reason to think), and one in which, if London beneficence had better adapted its arangements to meet it, the power of the law might oftener be interposed to protect and to avenge. But the stream of London charity flows in a channel which, though deep and mighty, is yet noiseless and underground ; not obvious or readily accessible to poor houseless wanderers ; and it cannot be denied that the outside air and framework of London society is harsh, cruel, and repulsive. In any case, however, I saw that part of her injuries might easily have been redressed, and I urged her often and earnestly to lay her complaint before a magistrate. Friendless as she was, I assured her that she would meet with immediate attention, and that English justice, which was no respecter of persons, would speedily and amply avenge her on the brutal ruffian who had plundered her little property. She promised me often that she would, but she delayed taking the steps I pointed out from time to time, for she was timid and dejected to a degree which showed how deeply sorrow had taken hold of her young heart ; and perhaps she thought justly that the most upright judge and the most righteous tribunals could do nothing to repair her heaviest wrongs. Something, however, would perhaps have been done, for it had been settled between us at length, but unhappily on the very last time but one that I was ever to see her, that in a day or two we should go together before a magistrate, and that I should speak on her behalf. This little service it was des-

tined, however, that I should never realise. Meantime, that which she rendered to me, and which was greater than I could ever have repaid her, was this :—One night, when we were pacing slowly along Oxford Street, and after a day when I had felt more than usually ill and faint, I requested her to turn off with me into Soho Square. Thither we went, and we sat down on the steps of a house, which to this hour I never pass without a pang of grief and an inner act of homage to the spirit of that unhappy girl, in memory of the noble action which she there performed. Suddenly, as we sate, I grew much worse. I had been leaning my head against her bosom, and all at once I sank from her arms and fell backwards on the steps. From the sensations I then had, I felt an inner conviction of the liveliest kind, that without some powerful and reviving stimulus I should either have died on the spot, or should at least have sunk to a point of exhaustion from which all reäscent under my friendless circumstances would soon have become hopeless. Then it was, at this crisis of my fate, that my poor orphan companion, who had herself met with little but injuries in this world, stretched out a saving hand to me. Uttering a cry of terror, but without a moment's delay, she ran off into Oxford Street, and in less time than could be imagined returned to me with a glass of port wine and spices, that acted upon my empty stomach, which at that time would have rejected all solid food, with an instantaneous power of restoration; and for this glass the generous girl without a murmur paid out of her humble purse at a time—be it remembered!—when she had scarcely wherewithal

to purchase the bare necessaries of life, and when she could have no reason to expect that I should ever be able to reimburse her.

Oh, youthful benefactress! how often in succeeding years, standing in solitary places, and thinking of thee with grief of heart and perfect love—how often have I wished that, as in ancient times, the curse of a father was believed to have a supernatural power, and to pursue its object with a fatal necessity of self-fulfilment; even so the benediction of a heart oppressed with gratitude might have a like prerogative, might have power given to it from above to chase, to haunt, to waylay, to overtake, to pursue thee into the central darkness of a London brothel, or (if it were possible) into the darkness of the grave, there to awaken thee with an authentic message of peace and forgiveness, and of final reconciliation!

I do not often weep: for not only do my thoughts on subjects connected with the chief interests of man daily, nay hourly, descend a thousand fathoms "too deep for tears;" not only does the sternness of my habits of thought present an antagonism to the feelings which prompt tears—wanting of necessity to those who, being protected usually by their levity from any tendency to meditative sorrow, would by that same levity be made incapable of resisting it on any casual access of such feelings; but also, I believe that all minds which have contemplated such objects as deeply as I have done, must, for their own protection from utter despondency, have early encouraged and cherished some tranquillising belief as to the future balances and the hieroglyphic mean-

ings of human sufferings. On these accounts I am cheerful to this hour, and, as I have said, I do not often weep. Yet some feelings, though not deeper or more passionate, are more tender than others; and often, when I walk at this time in Oxford Street by dreamy lamplight, and hear those airs played on a barrel-organ which years ago solaced me and my dear companion (as I must always call her), I shed tears, and muse with myself at the mysterious dispensation which so suddenly and so critically separated us for ever. How it happened the reader will understand from what remains of this introductory narration.

Soon after the period of the last incident I have recorded I met in Albemarle Street a gentleman of his late Majesty's household. This gentleman had received hospitalities on different occasions from my family, and he challenged me upon the strength of my family likeness. I did not attempt any disguise; I answered his questions ingenuously, and, on his pledging his word of honour that he would not betray me to my guardians, I gave him an address to my friend the attorney's. The next day I received from him a £10 bank-note. The letter enclosing it was delivered with other letters of business to the attorney, but though his look and manner informed me that he suspected its contents, he gave it up to me honourably and without demur.

This present, from the particular service to which it was applied, leads me naturally to speak of the purpose which had allured me up to London, and

which I had been (to use a forensic word) soliciting from the first day of my arrival in London to that of my final departure.

In so mighty a world as London it will surprise my readers that I should not have found some means of starving off the last extremities of penury; and it will strike them that two resources at least must have been open to me—viz., either to seek assistance from the friends of my family, or to turn my youthful talents and attainments into some channel of pecuniary emolument. As to the first course, I may observe generally, that what I dreaded beyond all other evils was the chance of being reclaimed by my guardians; not doubting that whatever power the law gave them would have been enforced against me to the utmost—that is, to the extremity of forcibly restoring me to the school which I had quitted, a restoration which, as it would in my eyes have been a dishonour, even if submitted to voluntarily, could not fail, when extorted from me in contempt and defiance of my own wishes and efforts, to have been a humiliation worse to me than death, and which would indeed have terminated in death. I was therefore shy enough of applying for assistance even in those quarters where I was sure of receiving it, at the risk of furnishing my guardians with any clue of recovering me. But as to London in particular, though doubtless my father had in his lifetime had many friends there, yet (as ten years had passed since his death) I remembered few of them even by name; and never having seen London before, except

once for a few hours, I knew not the address of even those few. To this mode of gaining help, therefore, in part the difficulty, but much more the paramount fear which I have mentioned, habitually indisposed me. In regard to the other mode, I now feel half inclined to join my reader in wondering that I should have overlooked it. As a corrector of Greek proofs (if in no other way) I might doubtless have gained enough for my slender wants. Such an office as this I could have discharged with an exemplary and punctual accuracy that would soon have gained me the confidence of my employers. But it must not be forgotten that, even for such an office as this, it was necessary that I should first of all have an introduction to some respectable publisher, and this I had no means of obtaining. To say the truth, however, it had never once occurred to me to think of literary labours as a source of profit. No mode sufficiently speedy of obtaining money had ever occurred to me but that of borrowing it on the strength of my future claims and expectations. This mode I sought by every avenue to compass; and amongst other persons I applied to a Jew named D——*

* To this same Jew, by the way, some eighteen months afterwards, I applied again on the same business; and, dating at that time from a respectable college, I was fortunate enough to gain his serious attention to my proposals. My necessities had not arisen from any extravagance or youthful levities (these my habits and the nature of my pleasures raised me far above), but simply from the vindictive malice of my guardian, who, when he found himself no longer able to prevent me from going to the university, had, as a parting token of his good nature, refused

To this Jew, and to other advertising money-lenders (some of whom were, I believe, also Jews), I had introduced myself with an account of my expectations; which account, on examining my father's will at Doctors' Commons, they had ascertained to be correct. The person there mentioned as the second son of —— was found to have all the claims (or more than all) that I had stated; but one question still remained, which the faces of the Jews pretty significantly suggested—was *I* that person? This doubt had never occurred to me as a possible one; I had rather feared, whenever my Jewish friends scrutinised me keenly, that I might be too well known to be that person, and that some

to sign an order for granting me a shilling beyond the allowance made to me at school—viz., £100 per annum. Upon this sum it was in my time barely possible to have lived in college, and not possible to a man who, though above the paltry affectation of ostentatious disregard for money, and without any expensive tastes, confided nevertheless rather too much in servants, and did not delight in the petty details of minute economy. I soon, therefore, became embarrassed, and at length, after a most voluminous negotiation with the Jew (some parts of which, if I had leisure to rehearse them, would greatly amuse my readers), I was put in possession of the sum I asked for, on the "regular" terms of paying the Jew seventeen and a half per cent. by way of annuity on all the money furnished; Israel, on his part, graciously resuming no more than about ninety guineas of the said money, on account of an attorney's bill (for what services, to whom rendered, and when, whether at the siege of Jerusalem, at the building of the second Temple, or on some earlier occasion, I have not yet been able to discover). How many perches this bill measured I really forget; but I still keep it in a cabinet of natural curiosities, and some time or other I believe I shall present it to the British Museum.

scheme might be passing in their minds for entrapping me and selling me to my guardians. It was strange to me to find my own self *materialiter* considered (so I expressed it, for I doated on logical accuracy of distinctions), accused, or at least suspected, of counterfeiting my own self *formaliter* considered. However, to satisfy their scruples, I took the only course in my power. Whilst I was in Wales I had received various letters from young friends; these I produced, for I carried them constantly in my pocket, being, indeed, by this time almost the only relics of my personal encumbrances (excepting the clothes I wore) which I had not in one way or other disposed of. Most of these letters were from the Earl of ——, who was at that time my chief (or rather only) confidential friend. These letters were dated from Eton. I had also some from the Marquis of ——, his father, who, though absorbed in agricultural pursuits, yet having been an Etoniam himself, and as good a scholar as a nobleman needs to be, still retained an affection for classical studies and for youthful scholars. He had accordingly, from the time that I was fifteen, corresponded with me; sometimes upon the great improvements which he had made or was meditating in the counties of M—— and Sl—— since I had been there, sometimes upon the merits of a Latin poet, and at other times suggesting subjects to me on which he wished me to write verses.

On reading the letters, one of my Jewish friends agreed to furnish me with two or three hundred pounds on my personal security, provided I could

persuade the young Earl—who was, by the way, not older than myself—to guarantee the payment on our coming of age ; the Jew's final object being, as I now suppose, not the trifling profit he could expect to make by me, but the prospect of establishing a connection with my noble friend, whose immense expectations were well known to him. In pursuance of this proposal on the part of the Jew, about eight or nine days after I had received the £10, I prepared to go down to Eton. Nearly £3 of the money I had given to my money-lending friend, on his alleging that the stamps must be bought, in order that the writings might be preparing whilst I was away from London. I thought in my heart that he was lying ; but I did not wish to give him any excuse for charging his own delays upon me. A smaller sum I had given to my friend the attorney (who was connected with the money-lenders as their lawyer), to which, indeed, he was entitled for his unfurnished lodgings. About fifteen shillings I had employed in re-establishing (though in a very humble way) my dress. Of the remainder I gave one quarter to Ann, meaning on my return to have divided with her whatever might remain. These arrangements made, soon after six o'clock on a dark winter evening I set off, accompanied by Ann, towards Piccadilly ; for it was my intention to go down as far as Salthill on the Bath or Bristol mail. Our course lay through a part of the town which has now all disappeared, so that I can no longer retrace its ancient boundaries—Swallow Street, I think it was called. Having time enough before us, however, we bore away

to the left until we came into Golden Square; there, near the corner of Sherrard Street, we sat down, not wishing to part in the tumult and blaze of Piccadilly. I had told her of my plans some time before, and I now assured her again that she should share in my good fortune, if I met with any, and that I would never forsake her as soon as I had power to protect her. This I fully intended, as much from inclination as from a sense of duty; for setting aside gratitude, which in any case must have made me her debtor for life, I loved her as affectionately as if she had been my sister; and at this moment with sevenfold tenderness, from pity at witnessing her extreme dejection. I had apparently most reason for dejection, because I was leaving the saviour of my life; yet I, considering the shock my health had received, was cheerful and full of hope. She, on the contrary, who was parting with one who had had little means of serving her, except by kindness and brotherly treatment, was overcome by sorrow; so that, when I kissed her at our final farewell, she put her arms about my neck and wept without speaking a word. I hoped to return in a week at farthest, and I agreed with her that on the fifth night from that, and every night afterwards, she would wait for me at six o'clock near the bottom of Great Titchfield Street, which had been our customary haven, as it were, of rendezvous, to prevent our missing each other in the great Mediterranean of Oxford Street. This and other measures of precaution I took; one only I forgot. She had either never told me, or (as a matter of no great interest)

I had forgotten her surname. It is a general practice, indeed, with girls of humble rank in her unhappy condition, not (as novel-reading women of higher pretensions) to style themselves *Miss Douglas*, *Miss Montague*, &c., but simply by their Christian names—*Mary*, *Jane*, *Frances*, &c. Her surname, as the surest means of tracing her hereafter, I ought now to have inquired; but the truth is, having no reason to think that our meeting could, in consequence of a short interruption, be more difficult or uncertain than it had been for so many weeks, I had scarcely for a moment adverted to it as necessary, or placed it amongst my memoranda against this parting interview; and my final anxieties being spent in comforting her with hopes, and in pressing upon her the necessity of getting some medicines for a violent cough and hoarseness with which she was troubled, I wholly forgot it until it was too late to recall her.

It was past eight o'clock when I reached the Gloucester Coffee-house, and the Bristol mail being on the point of going off, I mounted on the outside. The fine fluent motion * of this mail soon laid me asleep: it is somewhat remarkable that the first easy or refreshing sleep which I had enjoyed for some months, was on the outside of a mail-coach—a bed which at this day I find rather an uneasy one. Connected with this sleep was a little incident

* The Bristol mail is the best appointed in the kingdom, owing to the double advantages of an unusually good road and of an extra sum for the expenses subscribed by the Bristol merchants.

which served, as hundreds of others did at that time, to convince me how easily a man who has never been in any great distress may pass through life without knowing, in his own person at least, anything of the possible goodness of the human heart —or, as I must add with a sigh, of its possible vileness. So thick a curtain of *manners* is drawn over the features and expression of men's *natures*, that to the ordinary observer the two extremities, and the infinite field of varieties which lie between them, are all confounded ; the vast and multitudinous compass of their several harmonies reduced to the meagre outline of differences expressed in the gamut or alphabet of elementary sounds. The case was this : for the first four or five miles from London I annoyed my fellow-passenger on the roof by occasionally falling against him when the coach gave a lurch to his side ; and indeed, if the road had been less smooth and level than it is, I should have fallen off from weakness. Of this annoyance he complained heavily, as perhaps, in the same circumstances, most people would ; he expressed his complaint, however, more morosely than the occasion seemed to warrant, and if I had parted with him at that moment I should have thought of him (if I had considered it worth while to think of him at all) as a surly and almost brutal fellow. However, I was conscious that I had given him some cause for complaint, and therefore I apologized to him, and assured him I would do what I could to avoid falling asleep for the future ; and at the same time, in as few words as possible, I explained to him that I

was ill and in a weak state from long suffering, and that I could not afford at that time to take an inside place. This man's manner changed, upon hearing this explanation, in an instant ; and when I next woke for a minute from the noise and lights of Hounslow (for in spite of my wishes and efforts I had fallen asleep again within two minutes from the time I had spoken to him) I found that he had put his arm round me to protect me from falling off, and for the rest of my journey he behaved to me with the gentleness of a woman, so that at length I almost lay in his arms ; and this was the more kind, as he could not have known that I was not going the whole way to Bath or Bristol. Unfortunately, indeed, I *did* go rather farther than I intended, for so genial and so refreshing was my sleep, that the next time after leaving Hounslow that I fully awoke was upon the sudden pulling up of the mail (possibly at a post-office), and on inquiry I found that we had reached Maidenhead—six or seven miles, I think, ahead of Salthill. Here I alighted, and for the half-minute that the mail stopped I was entreated by my friendly companion (who, from the transient glimpse I had had of him in Piccadilly, seemed to me to be a gentleman's butler, or person of that rank) to go to bed without delay. This I promised, though with no intention of doing so ; and in fact I immediately set forward, or rather backward, on foot. It must then have been nearly midnight, but so slowly did I creep along that I heard a clock in a cottage strike four before I turned down the lane from Slough to

Eton. The air and the sleep had both refreshed me; but I was weary nevertheless. I remember a thought (obvious enough, and which has been prettily expressed by a Roman poet) which gave me some consolation at that moment under my poverty. There had been some time before a murder committed on or near Hounslow Heath. I think I cannot be mistaken when I say that the name of the murdered person was *Steele*, and that he was the owner of a lavender plantation in that neighbourhood. Every step of my progress was bringing me nearer to the Heath, and it naturally occurred to me that I and the accused murderer, if he were that night abroad, might at every instant be unconsciously approaching each other through the darkness; in which case, said I—supposing I, instead of being (as indeed I am) little better than an outcast—

Lord of my learning, and no land beside—

were, like my friend Lord ——, heir by general repute to £70,000 per annum, what a panic should I be under at this moment about my throat! Indeed, it was not likely that Lord —— should ever be in my situation. But nevertheless, the spirit of the remark remains true—that vast power and possessions make a man shamefully afraid of dying; and I am convinced that many of the most intrepid adventurers, who, by fortunately being poor, enjoy the full use of their natural courage, would, if at the very instant of going into action news were brought to them that they had unexpectedly succeeded to an estate in England of £50,000 a-year,

feel their dislike to bullets considerably sharpened,* and their efforts at perfect equanimity and self-possession proportionably difficult. So true it is, in the language of a wise man whose own experience had made him acquainted with both fortunes, that riches are better fitted

> To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
> Than tempt her to do ought may merit praise.
> *Paradise Regained.*

I dally with my subject because, to myself, the remembrance of these times is profoundly interesting. But my reader shall not have any further cause to complain, for I now hasten to its close. In the road between Slough and Eton I fell asleep, and just as the morning began to dawn I was awakened by the voice of a man standing over me and surveying me. I know not what he was: he was an ill-looking fellow, but not therefore of necessity an ill-meaning fellow; or, if he were, I suppose he thought that no person sleeping out-of-doors in winter could be worth robbing. In which conclusion, however, as it regarded myself, I beg to assure him, if he should be among my readers, that he was mistaken. After a slight remark he passed on; and I was not sorry at his disturbance, as it enabled me to pass through Eton before people were generally

* It will be objected that many men, of the highest rank and wealth, have in our own day, as well as throughout our history, been amongst the foremost in courting danger in battle. True; but this is not the case supposed; long familiarity with power has to them deadened its effect and its attractions.

up. The night had been heavy and lowering, but towards the morning it had changed to a slight frost, and the ground and the trees were now covered with rime. I slipped through Eton unobserved; washed myself, and as far as possible adjusted my dress, at a little public-house in Windsor; and about eight o'clock went down towards Pote's. On my road I met some junior boys, of whom I made inquiries. An Etonian is always a gentleman; and, in spite of my shabby habiliments, they answered me civilly. My friend Lord —— was gone to the University of ——. "Ibi omnis effusus labor!" I had, however, other friends at Eton; but it is not to all that wear that name in prosperity that a man is willing to present himself in distress. On recollecting myself, however, I asked for the Earl of D——, to whom (though my acquaintance with him was not so intimate as with some others) I should not have shrunk from presenting myself under any circumstances. He was still at Eton, though I believe on the wing for Cambridge. I called, was received kindly, and asked to breakfast.

Here let me stop for a moment to check my reader from any erroneous conclusions. Because I have had occasion incidentally to speak of various patrician friends, it must not be supposed that I have myself any pretension to rank and high blood. I thank God that I have not. I am the son of a plain English merchant, esteemed during his life for his great integrity, and strongly attached to literary pursuits (indeed, he was himself, anonymously, an author). If he had lived it was expected that he

would have been very rich ; but dying prematurely, he left no more than about £30,000 amongst seven different claimants. My mother I may mention with honour, as still more highly gifted ; for though unpretending to the name and honours of a *literary* woman, I shall presume to call her (what many literary women are not) an *intellectual* woman ; and I believe that if ever her letters should be collected and published, they would be thought generally to exhibit as much strong and masculine sense, delivered in as pure "mother English," racy and fresh with idiomatic graces, as any in our language—hardly excepting those of Lady M. W. Montague. These are my honours of descent, I have no other ; and I have thanked God sincerely that I have not, because, in my judgment, a station which raises a man too eminently above the level of his fellow-creatures is not the most favourable to moral or to intellectual qualities.

Lord D—— placed before me a most magnificent breakfast. It was really so ; but in my eyes it seemed trebly magnificent, from being the first regular meal, the first "good man's table," that I had sate down to for months. Strange to say, however, I could scarce eat anything. On the day when I first received my £10 bank-note I had gone to a baker's shop and bought a couple of rolls ; this very shop I had two months or six weeks before surveyed with an eagerness of desire which it was almost humiliating to me to recollect. I remembered the story about Otway, and feared that there might be danger in eating too rapidly. But I had no need for alarm ; my appetite

was quite sunk, and I became sick before I had eaten half of what I had bought. This effect from eating what approached to a meal I continued to feel for weeks ; or, when I did not experience any nausea, part of what I ate was rejected, sometimes with acidity, sometimes immediately and without any acidity. On the present occasion, at Lord D— —'s table, I found myself not at all better than usual, and in the midst of luxuries I had no appetite. I had, however, unfortunately, at all times a craving for wine ; I explained my situation, therefore, to Lord D——, and gave him a short account of my late sufferings, at which he expressed great compassion, and called for wine. This gave me a momentary relief and pleasure ; and on all occasions when I had an opportunity I never failed to drink wine, which I worshipped then as I have since worshipped opium. I am convinced, however, that this indulgence in wine contributed to strengthen my malady, for the tone of my stomach was apparently quite sunk, and by a better regimen it might sooner, and perhaps effectually, have been revived. I hope that it was not from this love of wine that I lingered in the neighbourhood of my Eton friends ; I persuaded myself then that it was from reluctance to ask of Lord D——, on whom I was conscious I had not sufficient claims, the particular service in quest of which I had come down to Eton. I was, however, unwilling to lose my journey, and—I asked it. Lord D——, whose good nature was unbounded, and which, in regard to myself, had been measured rather by his compassion perhaps for my condition, and his knowledge of my intimacy with

some of his relatives, than by an over-rigorous inquiry into the extent of my own direct claims, faltered, nevertheless, at this request. He acknowledged that he did not like to have any dealings with money-lenders, and feared lest such a transaction might come to the ears of his connexions. Moreover, he doubted whether *his* signature, whose expectations were so much more bounded than those of ——, would avail with my unchristian friends. However, he did not wish, as it seemed, to mortify me by an absolute refusal ; for after a little consideration he promised, under certain conditions which he pointed out, to give his security. Lord D—— was at this time not eighteen years of age ; but I have often doubted, on recollecting since the good sense and prudence which on this occasion he mingled with so much urbanity of manner (an urbanity which in him wore the grace of youthful sincerity), whether any statesman—the oldest and the most accomplished in diplomacy—could have acquitted himself better under the same circumstances. Most people, indeed, cannot be addressed on such a business without surveying you with looks as austere and unpropitious as those of a Saracen's head.

Recomforted by this promise, which was not quite equal to the best but far above the worst that I had pictured to myself as possible, I returned in a Windsor coach to London three days after I had quitted it. And now I come to the end of my story. The Jews did not approve of Lord D——'s terms ; whether they would in the end have acceded to them, and were only seeking time for making due inquiries, I know

not; but many delays were made, time passed on, the small fragment of my bank-note had just melted away, and before any conclusion could have been put to the business I must have relapsed into my former state of wretchedness. Suddenly, however, at this crisis, an opening was made, almost by accident, for reconciliation with my friends; I quitted London in haste for a remote part of England; after some time I proceeded to the university, and it was not until many months had passed away that I had it in my power again to revisit the ground which had become so interesting to me, and to this day remains so, as the chief scene of my youthful sufferings.

Meantime, what had become of poor Ann? For her I have reserved my concluding words. According to our agreement, I sought her daily, and waited for her every night, so long as I stayed in London, at the corner of Titchfield Street. I inquired for her of every one who was likely to know her, and during the last hours of my stay in London I put into activity every means of tracing her that my knowledge of London suggested and the limited extent of my power made possible. The street where she had lodged I knew, but not the house; and I remembered at last some account which she had given me of ill-treatment from her landlord, which made it probable that she had quitted those lodgings before we parted. She had few acquaintances; most people, besides, thought that the earnestness of my inquiries arose from motives which moved their laughter or

their slight regard ; and others, thinking I was in chase of a girl who had robbed me of some trifles, were naturally and excusably indisposed to give me any clue to her, if indeed they had any to give. Finally as my despairing resource, on the day I left London I put into the hands of the only person who (I was sure) must know Ann by sight, from having been in company with us once or twice, an address to ——, in ——shire, at that time the residence of my family. But to this hour I have never heard a syllable about her. This, amongst such troubles as most men meet with in this life, has been my heaviest affliction. If she lived, doubtless we must have been some time in search of each other, at the very same moment, through the mighty labyrinths of London ; perhaps even within a few feet of each other—a barrier no wider than a London street often amounting in the end to a separation for eternity ! During some years I hoped that she *did* live ; and I suppose that, in the literal and unrhetorical use of the word *myriad*, I may say that on my different visits to London I have looked into many, many myriads of female faces, in the hope of meeting her. I should know her again amongst a thousand, if I saw her for a moment ; for though not handsome, she had a sweet expression of countenance and a peculiar and graceful carriage of the head. I sought her, I have said, in hope. So it was for years ; but now I should fear to see her ; and her cough, which grieved me when I parted with her, is now my consolation. I now wish to see her no longer ; but think of her, more

gladly, as one long since laid in the grave—in the grave, I would hope, of a Magdalen; taken away, before injuries and cruelty had blotted out and transfigured her ingenuous nature, or the brutalities of ruffians had completed the ruin they had begun.

[The remainder of this very interesting article will be given in the next number.—ED.]

CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER.

PART II.

From the London Magazine for October 1821.

So then, Oxford Street, stony-hearted step-mother! thou that listenest to the sighs of orphans and drinkest the tears of children, at length I was dismissed from thee; the time was come at last that I no more should pace in anguish thy never-ending terraces, no more should dream and wake in captivity to the pangs of hunger. Successors too many, to myself and Ann, have doubtless since then trodden in our footsteps, inheritors of our calamities; other orphans than Ann have sighed; tears have been shed by other children; and thou, Oxford Street, hast since doubtless echoed to the groans of innumerable hearts. For myself, however, the storm which I had outlived seemed to have been the pledge of a long fair-weather—the premature sufferings which I had paid down to have been accepted as a ransom for many years to come, as a price of long immunity from sorrow; and if again I walked in London a solitary and contemplative man (as oftentimes I did), I walked

for the most part in serenity and peace of mind. And although it is true that the calamities of my noviciate in London had struck root so deeply in my bodily constitution, that afterwards they shot up and flourished afresh, and grew into a noxious umbrage that has overshadowed and darkened my latter years, yet these second assaults of suffering were met with a fortitude more confirmed, with the resources of a maturer intellect, and with alleviations from sympathising affection—how deep and tender!

Thus, however, with whatsoever alleviations, years that were far asunder were bound together by subtle links of suffering derived from a common root. And herein I notice an instance of the short-sightedness of human desires, that oftentimes on moonlight nights, during my first mournful abode in London, my consolation was (if such it could be thought) to gaze from Oxford Street up every avenue in succession which pierces through the heart of Marylebone to the fields and the woods; for *that*, said I, travelling with my eyes up the long vistas which lay part in light and part in shade, "*that* is the road to the North, and therefore to ——, and if I had the wings of a dove, *that* way I would fly for comfort." Thus I said, and thus I wished, in my blindness. Yet even in that very northern region it was, even in that very valley, nay, in that very house to which my erroneous wishes pointed, that this second birth of my sufferings began, and that they again threatened to besiege the citadel of life and hope. There it was that for years I was persecuted by visions as ugly, and as ghastly phantoms as ever

naunted the couch of an Orestes; and in this unhappier than he, that sleep, which comes to all as a respite and a restoration, and to him especially as a blessed* balm for his wounded heart and his haunted brain, visited me as my bitterest scourge. Thus blind was I in my desires; yet if a veil interposes between the dim-sightedness of man and his future calamities, the same veil hides from him their alleviations, and a grief which had not been feared is met by consolations which had not been hoped. I therefore, who participated, as it were, in the troubles of Orestes (excepting only in his agitated conscience), participated no less in all his supports. My Eumenides, like his, were at my bed-feet, and stared in upon me through the curtains; but watching by my pillow, or defrauding herself of sleep to bear me company through the heavy watches of the night, sate my Electra; for thou, beloved M., dear companion of my later years, thou wast my Electra! and neither in nobility of mind nor in long-suffering affection wouldst permit that a Grecian sister should excel an English wife. For thou thoughtest not much to stoop to humble offices of kindness and to servile† ministrations of tenderest affection—to wipe away for years the unwholesome dews upon the forehead, or to refresh the lips when parched and baked with fever; nor even when thy own peaceful slumbers had by long sympathy become infected with the spectacle of my dread contest with phantoms and shadowy

* Φιλον ὑπνη θελγητρον ἐπικουρον νοσου.

† ἡδυ δουλευμα.—EURIP. *Orest.*

enemies that oftentimes bade me "sleep no more!" —not even then didst thou utter a complaint or any murmur, nor withdraw thy angelic smiles, nor shrink from thy service of love, more than Electra did of old. For she too, though she was a Grecian woman, and the daughter of the king * of men, yet wept sometimes, and hid her face † in her robe.

But these troubles are past; and thou wilt read records of a period so dolorous to us both as the legend of some hideous dream that can return no more. Meantime, I am again in London, and again I pace the terraces of Oxford Street by night; and oftentimes, when I am oppressed by anxieties that demand all my philosophy and the comfort of thy presence to support, and yet remember that I am separated from thee by three hundred miles and the length of three dreary months, I look up the streets that run northwards from Oxford Street, upon moonlight nights, and recollect my youthful ejaculation of anguish; and remembering that thou art sitting alone in that same valley, and mistress of that very house to which my heart turned in its blindness

* ἀναξἀνδρων Ἀγαμεμνων.

† ὀμμα θεισ' ἑιτω πεπλων. The scholar will know that throughout this passage I refer to the early scenes of the Orestes; one of the most beautiful exhibitions of the domestic affections which even the dramas of Euripides can furnish. To the English reader it may be necessary to say that the situation at the opening of the drama is that of a brother attended only by his sister during the demoniacal possession of a suffering conscience (or, in the mythology of the play, haunted by the Furies), and in circumstances of immediate danger from enemies, and of desertion or cold regard from nominal friends.

nineteen years ago, I think that, though blind indeed, and scattered to the winds of late, the promptings of my heart may yet have had reference to a remoter time, and may be justified if read in another meaning; and if I could allow myself to descend again to the impotent wishes of childhood, I should again say to myself, as I look to the North, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove——" and with how just a confidence in thy good and gracious nature might I add the other half of my early ejaculation—"And *that* way I would fly for comfort!"

The Pleasures of Opium.

It is so long since I first took opium that if it had been a trifling incident in my life I might have forgotten its date; but cardinal events are not to be forgotten, and from circumstances connected with it I remember that it must be referred to the autumn of 1804. During that season I was in London, having come thither for the first time since my entrance at college. And my introduction to opium arose in the following way. From an early age I had been accustomed to wash my head in cold water at least once a day: being suddenly seized with toothache, I attributed it to some relaxation caused by an accidental intermission of that practice, jumped out of bed, plunged my head into a basin of cold water, and with hair thus wetted went to sleep. The next morning, as I need hardly say, I awoke with excruciating rheumatic pains of the head and face, from which I had

hardly any respite for about twenty days. On the twenty-first day I think it was, and on a Sunday, that I went out into the streets, rather to run away, if possible, from my torments, than with any distinct purpose. By accident I met a college acquaintance, who recommended opium. Opium! dread agent of unimaginable pleasure and pain! I had heard of it as I had of manna or of ambrosia, but no further. How unmeaning a sound was it at that time: what solemn chords does it now strike upon my heart! what heart-quaking vibrations of sad and happy remembrances! Reverting for a moment to these, I feel a mystic importance attached to the minutest circumstances connected with the place and the time and the man (if man he was) that first laid open to me the Paradise of Opium-eaters. It was a Sunday afternoon, wet and cheerless: and a duller spectacle this earth of ours has not to show than a rainy Sunday in London. My road homewards lay through Oxford Street; and near "the stately Pantheon" (as Mr. Wordsworth has obligingly called it) I saw a druggist's shop. The druggist—unconscious minister of celestial pleasures!—as if in sympathy with the rainy Sunday, looked dull and stupid, just as any mortal druggist might be expected to look on a Sunday; and when I asked for the tincture of opium, he gave it to me as any other man might do, and furthermore, out of my shilling returned me what seemed to be real copper halfpence, taken out of a real wooden drawer. Nevertheless, in spite of such indications of humanity, he has ever since existed in my mind as the

beatific vision of an immortal druggist, sent down to earth on a special mission to myself. And it confirms me in this way of considering him, that when I next came up to London I sought him near the stately Pantheon, and found him not; and thus to me, who knew not his name (if indeed he had one), he seemed rather to have vanished from Oxford Street than to have removed in any bodily fashion. The reader may choose to think of him as possibly no more than a sublunary druggist; it may be so, but my faith is better—I believe him to have evanesced,* or evaporated. So unwillingly would I connect any mortal remembrances with that hour, and place, and creature, that first brought me acquainted with the celestial drug.

Arrived at my lodgings, it may be supposed that I lost not a moment in taking the quantity prescribed. I was necessarily ignorant of the whole art and mystery of opium-taking, and what I took I took under every disadvantage. But I took it—and in an hour—oh, heavens! what a revulsion! what an upheaving, from its lowest depths, of inner spirit! what an apocalypse of the world within me!

Evanesced: this way of going off the stage of life appears to have been well known in the 17th century, but at that time to have been considered a peculiar privilege of blood-royal, and by no means to be allowed to druggists. For about the year 1686 a poet of rather ominous name (and who, by-the-bye, did ample justice to his name), viz., Mr. *Flat-man*, in speaking of the death of Charles II. expresses his surprise that any prince should commit so absurd an act as dying, because, says he,

"Kings should disdain to die, and only *disappear*."

They should *abscond*, that is, into the other world.

That my pains had vanished was now a trifle in my eyes: this negative effect was swallowed up in the immensity of those positive effects which had opened before me—in the abyss of divine enjoyment thus suddenly revealed. Here was a panacea, a φαρμακον νήπενθες for all human woes; here was the secret of happiness, about which philosophers had disputed for so many ages, at once discovered: happiness might now be bought for a penny, and carried in the waistcoat pocket; portable ecstacies might be had corked up in a pint bottle, and peace of mind could be sent down in gallons by the mail-coach. But if I talk in this way the reader will think I am laughing, and I can assure him that nobody will laugh long who deals much with opium: its pleasures even are of a grave and solemn complexion, and in his happiest state the opium-eater cannot present himself in the character of *L'Allegro:* even then he speaks and thinks as becomes *Il Penseroso.* Nevertheless, I have a very reprehensible way of jesting at times in the midst of my own misery; and unless when I am checked by some more powerful feelings, I am afraid I shall be guilty of this indecent practice even in these annals of suffering or enjoyment. The reader must allow a little to my infirm nature in this respect; and with a few indulgences of that sort I shall endeavour to be as grave, if not drowsy, as fits a theme like opium, so anti-mercurial as it really is, and so drowsy as it is falsely reputed.

And first, one word with respect to its bodily effects; for upon all that has been hitherto written on the subject of opium, whether by travellers in

Turkey (who may plead their privilege of lying as an old immemorial right), or by professors of medicine, writing *ex cathedrâ*, I have but one emphatic criticism to pronounce—Lies! lies! lies! I remember once, in passing a book-stall, to have caught these words from a page of some satiric author: "By this time I became convinced that the London newspapers spoke truth at least twice a week, viz., on Tuesday and Saturday, and might safely be depended upon for—the list of bankrupts." In like manner, I do by no means deny that some truths have been delivered to the world in regard to opium. Thus it has been repeatedly affirmed by the learned that opium is a dusky brown in colour; and this, take notice, I grant. Secondly, that it is rather dear, which also I grant; for in my time East Indian opium has been three guineas a pound, and Turkey eight. And thirdly, that if you eat a good deal of it, most probably you must—do what is particularly disagreeable to any man of regular habits, viz., die.* These weighty propositions are, all and singular, true: I cannot gainsay them: and truth ever was, and will be, commendable. But in these three theorems I believe we have exhausted the stock of knowledge as yet accumulated by men on the subject of opium.

* Of this, however, the learned appear latterly to have doubted; for in a pirated edition of Buchan's *Domestic Medicine*, which I once saw in the hands of a farmer's wife, who was studying it for the benefit of her health, the Doctor was made to say—"Be particularly careful never to take above five-and-twenty *ounces* of laudanum at once;" the true reading being probably five-and-twenty *drops*, which are held equal to about one grain of crude opium.

And therefore, worthy doctors, as there seems to be room for further discoveries, stand aside, and allow me to come forward and lecture on this matter.

First, then, it is not so much affirmed as taken for granted, by all who ever mention opium, formally or incidentally, that it does or can produce intoxication. Now, reader, assure yourself, *meo periculo*, that no quantity of opium ever did or could intoxicate. As to the tincture of opium (commonly called laudanum) *that* might certainly intoxicate if a man could bear to take enough of it; but why? Because it contains so much proof spirit, and not because it contains so much opium. But crude opium, I affirm peremptorily, is incapable of producing any state of body at all resembling that which is produced by alcohol, and not in *degree* only incapable, but even in *kind:* it is not in the quantity of its effects merely, but in the quality, that it differs altogether. The pleasure given by wine is always mounting and tending to a crisis, after which it declines; that from opium, when once generated, is stationary for eight or ten hours: the first, to borrow a technical distinction from medicine, is a case of acute—the second, the chronic pleasure; the one is a flame, the other a steady and equable glow. But the main distinction lies in this, that whereas wine disorders the mental faculties, opium, on the contrary (if taken in a proper manner), introduces amongst them the most exquisite order, legislation, and harmony. Wine robs a man of his self-possession; opium greatly invigorates it. Wine unsettles and clouds the judgement, and gives a preternatural brightness and a

vivid exaltation to the contempts and the admirations, the loves and the hatreds of the drinker; opium, on the contrary, communicates serenity and equipoise to all the faculties, active or passive, and with respect to the temper and moral feelings in general it gives simply that sort of vital warmth which is approved by the judgment, and which would probably always accompany a bodily constitution of primeval or antediluvian health. Thus, for instance, opium, like wine, gives an expansion to the heart and the benevolent affections; but then, with this remarkable difference, that in the sudden development of kind-heartedness which accompanies inebriation there is always more or less of a maudlin character, which exposes it to the contempt of the bystander. Men shake hands, swear eternal friendship, and shed tears, no mortal knows why; and the sensual creature is clearly uppermost. But the expansion of the benigner feelings incident to opium is no febrile access, but a healthy restoration to that state which the mind would naturally recover upon the removal of any deep-seated irritation of pain that had disturbed and quarrelled with the impulses of a heart originally just and good. True it is that even wine, up to a certain point and with certain men, rather tends to exalt and to steady the intellect; I myself, who have never been a great wine-drinker, used to find that half-a-dozen glasses of wine advantageously affected the faculties—brightened and intensified the consciousness, and gave to the mind a feeling of being "ponderibus librata suis;" and certainly it is most absurdly said, in popular

language, of any man that he is *disguised* in liquor; for, on the contrary, most men are disguised by sobriety, and it is when they are drinking (as some old gentleman says in Athenæus), that men ἑαυτοὺς ἐμφανίζουσιν οἵτινες εἰσίν—display themselves in their true complexion of character, which surely is not disguising themselves. But still, wine constantly leads a man to the brink of absurdity and extravagance, and beyond a certain point it is sure to volatilise and to disperse the intellectual energies: whereas opium always seems to compose what had been agitated, and to concentrate what had been distracted. In short, to sum up all in one word, a man who is inebriated, or tending to inebriation, is, and feels that he is, in a condition which calls up into supremacy the merely human, too often the brutal part of his nature; but the opium-eater (I speak of him who is not suffering from any disease or other remote effects of opium) feels that the diviner part of his nature is paramount; that is, the moral affections are in a state of cloudless serenity, and over all is the great light of the majestic intellect.

This is the doctrine of the true church on the subject of opium: of which church I acknowledge myself to be the only member—the alpha and the omega: but then it is to be recollected that I speak from the ground of a large and profound personal experience: whereas most of the unscientific * authors who have

* Amongst the great herd of travellers, &c., who show sufficiently by their stupidity that they never held any intercourse with opium, I must caution my readers specially against the brilliant author of *Anastasius*. This gentleman, whose wit

at all treated of opium, and even of those who have written expressly on the materia medica, make it evident, from the horror they express of it, that their experimental knowledge of its action is none at all. I will, however, candidly acknowledge that I have met with one person who bore evidence to its intoxicating power, such as staggered my own incredulity; for he was a surgeon, and had himself taken opium largely. I happened to say to him that his enemies (as I had heard) charged him with talking nonsense on politics, and that his friends apologized for him by suggesting that he was constantly in a state of intoxication from opium. Now the accusation, said I, is not *primâ facie* and of necessity an absurd one;

would lead one to presume him an opium-eater, has made it impossible to consider him in that character, from the grievous misrepresentation which he gives of its effects at pp. 215–17 of vol. i. 'Upon consideration it must appear such to the author himself, for, waiving the errors I have insisted on in the text, which (and others) are adopted in the fullest manner, he will himself admit that an old gentleman "with a snow-white beard," who eats "ample doses of opium," and is yet able to deliver what is meant and received as very weighty counsel on the bad effects of that practice, is but an indifferent evidence that opium either kills people prematurely or sends them into a madhouse. But for my part, I see into this old gentleman and his motives: the fact is, he was enamoured of "the little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug" which Anastasius carried about him; and no way of obtaining it so safe and so feasible occurred as that of frightening its owner out of his wits (which, by the bye, are none of the strongest). This commentary throws a new light upon the case, and greatly improves it as a story; for the old gentleman's speech, considered as a lecture on pharmacy, is highly absurd; but considered as a hoax on Anastasius, it reads excellently.

but the defence *is*. To my surprise, however, he insisted that both his enemies and his friends were in the right. "I will maintain," said he, "that I *do* talk nonsense; and secondly, I will maintain that I do not talk nonsense upon principle, or with any view to profit, but solely and simply, said he, solely and simply—solely and simply (repeating it three times over), because I am drunk with opium, and *that* daily." I replied that, as to the allegation of his enemies, as it seemed to be established upon such respectable testimony, seeing that the three parties concerned all agree in it, it did not become me to question it; but the defence set up I must demur to. He proceeded to discuss the matter, and to lay down his reasons; but it seemed to me so impolite to pursue an argument which must have presumed a man mistaken in a point belonging to his own profession, that I did not press him even when his course of argument seemed open to objection; not to mention that a man who talks nonsense, even though "with no view to profit," is not altogether the most agreeable partner in a dispute, whether as opponent or respondent. I confess, however, that the authority of a surgeon, and one who was reputed a good one, may seem a weighty one to my prejudice; but still I must plead my experience, which was greater than his greatest by 7,000 drops a-day; and though it was not possible to suppose a medical man unacquainted with the characteristic symptoms of vinous intoxication, it yet struck me that he might proceed on a logical error of using the word intoxication with too great latitude, and extending it generi-

cally to all modes of nervous excitement, instead of restricting it as the expression for a specific sort of excitement connected with certain diagnostics. Some people have maintained in my hearing that they had been drunk upon green tea ; and a medical student in London, for whose knowledge in his profession I have reason to feel great respect, assured me the other day that a patient in recovering from an illness had got drunk on a beef-steak.

Having dwelt so much on this first and leading error in respect to opium, I shall notice very briefly a second and a third, which are, that the elevation of spirits produced by opium is necessarily followed by a proportionate depression, and that the natural and even immediate consequence of opium is torpor and stagnation, animal and mental. The first of these errors I shall content myself with simply denying ; assuring my reader that for ten years, during which I took opium at intervals, the day succeeding to that on which I allowed myself this luxury was always a day of unusually good spirits.

With respect to the torpor supposed to follow, or rather (if we were to credit the numerous pictures of Turkish opium-eaters) to accompany the practice of opium-eating, I deny that also. Certainly opium is classed under the head of narcotics, and some such effect it may produce in the end ; but the primary effects of opium are always, and in the highest degree, to excite and stimulate the system. This first stage of its action always lasted with me, during my noviciate, for upwards of eight hours ; so that it must be the fault of the opium-eater himself if he does not

so time his exhibition of the dose (to speak medically) as that the whole weight of its narcotic influence may descend upon his sleep. Turkish opium-eaters, it seems, are absurd enough to sit, like so many equestrian statues, on logs of wood as stupid as themselves. But that the reader may judge of the degree in which opium is likely to stupefy the faculties of an Englishman, I shall (by way of treating the question illustratively, rather than argumentatively) describe the way in which I myself often passed an opium evening in London during the period between 1804–1812. It will be seen that at least opium did not move me to seek solitude, and much less to seek inactivity, or the torpid state of self-involution ascribed to the Turks. I give this account at the risk of being pronounced a crazy enthusiast or visionary ; but I regard *that* little. I must desire my reader to bear in mind that I was a hard student, and at severe studies for all the rest of my time ; and certainly I had a right occasionally to relaxations as well as other people. These, however, I allowed myself but seldom.

The late Duke of —— used to say, "Next Friday, by the blessing of heaven, I purpose to be drunk ;" and in like manner I used to fix beforehand how often within a given time, and when, I would commit a debauch of opium. This was seldom more than once in three weeks, for at that time I could not have ventured to call every day, as I did afterwards, for "*a glass of laudanum negus, warm, and without sugar.*" No, as I have said, I seldom drank laudanum, at that time, more than once in three weeks:

This was usually on a Tuesday or a Saturday night; my reason for which was this. In those days Grassini sang at the Opera, and her voice was delightful to me beyond all that I had ever heard. I know not what may be the state of the Opera-house now, having never been within its walls for seven or eight years, but at that time it was by much the most pleasant place of public resort in London for passing an evening. Five shillings admitted one to the gallery, which was subject to far less annoyance than the pit of the theatres; the orchestra was distinguished by its sweet and melodious grandeur from all English orchestras, the composition of which, I confess, is not acceptable to my ear, from the predominance of the clamorous instruments and the absolute tyranny of the violin. The choruses were divine to hear, and when Grassini appeared in some interlude, as she often did, and poured forth her passionate soul as Andromache at the tomb of Hector, &c., I question whether any Turk, of all that ever entered the Paradise of Opium-eaters, can have had half the pleasure I had. But, indeed, I honour the barbarians too much by supposing them capable of any pleasures approaching to the intellectual ones of an Englishman. For music is an intellectual or a sensual pleasure according to the temperament of him who hears it. And, by-the-bye, with the exception of the fine extravaganza on that subject in "Twelfth Night," I do not recollect more than one thing said adequately on the subject of music in all literature; it is a passage in the

Religio Medici * of Sir T. Brown, and though chiefly remarkable for its sublimity, has also a philosophic value, inasmuch as it points to the true theory of musical effects. The mistake of most people is to suppose that it is by the ear they communicate with music, and therefore that they are purely passive to its effects. But this is not so; it is by the reaction of the mind upon the notices of the ear (the *matter* coming by the senses, the *form* from the mind) that the pleasure is constructed, and therefore it is that people of equally good ear differ so much in this point from one another. Now, opium, by greatly increasing the activity of the mind, generally increases, of necessity, that particular mode of its activity by which we are able to construct out of the raw material of organic sound an elaborate intellectual pleasure. But, says a friend, a succession of musical sounds is to me like a collection of Arabic characters; I can attach no ideas to them. Ideas! my good sir? There is no occasion for them; all that class of ideas which can be available in such a case has a language of representative feelings. But this is a subject foreign to my present purposes; it is sufficient to say that a chorus, &c., of elaborate harmony displayed before me, as in a piece of arras work, the whole of my past life—not as if recalled by an act of memory, but as if present and incarnated in the music; no

* I have not the book at this moment to consult; but I think the passage begins—"And even that tavern music, which makes one man merry, another mad, in me strikes a deep fit of devotion," &c.

longer painful to dwell upon ; but the detail of its incidents removed or blended in some hazy abstraction, and its passions exalted, spiritualized, and sublimed. All this was to be had for five shillings. And over and above the music of the stage and the orchestra, I had all around me, in the intervals of the performance, the music of the Italian language talked by Italian women—for the gallery was usually crowded with Italians—and I listened with a pleasure such as that with which Weld the traveller lay and listened, in Canada, to the sweet laughter of Indian women ; for the less you understand of a language, the more sensible you are to the melody or harshness of its sounds. For such a purpose, therefore, it was an advantage to me that I was a poor Italian scholar, reading it but little, and not speaking it at all, nor understanding a tenth part of what I heard spoken.

These were my opera pleasures ; but another pleasure I had which, as it could be had only on a Saturday night, occasionally struggled with my love of the Opera ; for at that time Tuesday and Saturday were the regular opera nights. On this subject I am afraid I shall be rather obscure, but I can assure the reader not at all more so than Marinus in his Life of Proclus, or many other biographers and autobiographers of fair reputation. This pleasure, I have said, was to be had only on a Saturday night. What, then, was Saturday night to me more than any other night? I had no labours that I rested from, no wages to receive ; what needed I to care for Saturday night, more than as it was a

summons to hear Grassini? True, most logical reader; what you say is unanswerable. And yet so it was and is, that whereas different men throw their feelings into different channels, and most are apt to show their interest in the concerns of the poor chiefly by sympathy, expressed in some shape or other, with their distresses and sorrows, I at that time was disposed to express my interest by sympathising with their pleasures. The pains of poverty I had lately seen too much of, more than I wished to remember; but the pleasures of the poor, their consolations of spirit, and their reposes from bodily toil, can never become oppressive to contemplate. Now Saturday night is the season for the chief, regular, and periodic return of rest of the poor; in this point the most hostile sects unite, and acknowledge a common link of brotherhood; almost all Christendom rests from its labours. It is a rest introductory to another rest, and divided by a whole day and two nights from the renewal of toil. On this account I feel always, on a Saturday night, as though I also were released from some yoke of labour, had some wages to receive, and some luxury of repose to enjoy. For the sake, therefore, of witnessing, upon as large a scale as possible, a spectacle with which my sympathy was so entire, I used often on Saturday nights, after I had taken opium, to wander forth, without much regarding the direction or the distance, to all the markets and other parts of London to which the poor resort of a Saturday night, for laying out their wages. Many a family party, consisting of a man, his wife, and sometimes one or

two of his children, have I listened to, as they stood consulting on their ways and means, or the strength of their exchequer, or the price of household articles. Gradually I became familiar with their wishes, their difficulties, and their opinions. Sometimes there might be heard murmurs of discontent, but far oftener expressions on the countenance, or uttered in words, of patience, hope, and tranquillity. And taken generally, I must say that, in this point at least, the poor are more philosophic than the rich—that they show a more ready and cheerful submission to what they consider as irremediable evils or irreparable losses. Whenever I saw occasion, or could do it without appearing to be intrusive, I joined their parties, and gave my opinion upon the matter in discussion, which, if not always judicious, was always received indulgently. If wages were a little higher or expected to be so, or the quartern loaf a little lower, or it was reported that onions and butter were expected to fall, I was glad ; yet, if the contrary were true, I drew from opium some means of consoling myself. For opium (like the bee, that extracts its materials indiscriminately from roses and from the soot of chimneys) can overrule all feelings into compliance with the master-key. Some of these rambles led me to great distances, for an opium-eater is too happy to observe the motion of time ; and sometimes in my attempts to steer homewards, upon nautical principles, by fixing my eye on the pole-star, and seeking ambitiously for a north-west passage, instead of circumnavigating all the capes and headlands I had doubled in my outward voyage, I came

suddenly upon such knotty problems of alleys, such enigmatical entries, and such sphynx's riddles of streets without thoroughfares, as must, I conceive, baffle the audacity of porters and confound the intellects of hackney-coachmen. I could almost have believed at times that I must be the first discoverer of some of these *terræ incognitæ*, and doubted whether they had yet been laid down in the modern charts of London. For all this, however, I paid a heavy price in distant years, when the human face tyrannised over my dreams, and the perplexities of my steps in London came back and haunted my sleep, with the feeling of perplexities, moral and intellectual, that brought confusion to the reason, or anguish and remorse to the conscience.

Thus I have shown that opium does not of necessity produce inactivity or torpor, but that, on the contrary, it often led me into markets and theatres. Yet, in candour, I will admit that markets and theatres are not the appropriate haunts of the opium-eater when in the divinest state incident to his enjoyment. In that state, crowds become an oppression to him ; music even, too sensual and gross. He naturally seeks solitude and silence, as indispensable conditions of those trances, or profoundest reveries, which are the crown and consummation of what opium can do for human nature. I, whose disease it was to meditate too much and to observe too little, and who upon my first entrance at college was nearly falling into a deep melancholy, from brooding too much on the sufferings which I had witnessed in London, was sufficiently aware of the tendencies of

my own thoughts to do all I could to counteract them. I was, indeed, like a person who, according to the old legend, had entered the cave of Trophonius; and the remedies I sought were to force myself into society, and to keep my understanding in continual activity upon matters of science. But for these remedies I should certainly have become hypochondriacally melancholy. In-after years, however, when my cheerfulness was more fully re-established, I yielded to my natural inclination for a solitary life. And at that time I often fell into these reveries upon taking opium; and more than once it has happened to me, on a summer night, when I have been at an open window, in a room from which I could overlook the sea at a mile below me, and could command a view of the great town of L——, at about the same distance, that I have sate from sunset to sunrise, motionless, and without wishing to move.

I shall be charged with mysticism, Behmenism, quietism, &c., but *that* shall not alarm me. Sir H. Vane, the younger, was one of our wisest men; and let my reader see if he, in his philosophical works, be half as unmystical as I am. I say, then, that it has often struck me that the scene itself was somewhat typical of what took place in such a reverie. The town of L—— represented the earth, with its sorrows and its graves left behind, yet not out of sight, nor wholly forgotten. The ocean, in everlasting but gentle agitation, and brooded over by a dove-like calm, might not unfitly typify the mind and the mood which then swayed it. For it seemed to me as if

then first I stood at a distance and aloof from the uproar of life; as if the tumult, the fever, and the strife were suspended; a respite granted from the secret burthens of the heart; a sabbath of repose; a resting from human labours. Here were the hopes which blossom in the paths of life reconciled with the peace which is in the grave; motions of the intellect as unwearied as the heavens, yet for all anxieties a halcyon calm; a tranquillity that seemed no product of inertia, but as if resulting from mighty and equal antagonisms; infinite activities, infinite repose.

Oh, just, subtle, and mighty opium! that to the hearts of poor and rich alike, for the wounds that will never heal, and for "the pangs that tempt the spirit to rebel," bringest an assuaging balm; eloquent opium! that with thy potent rhetoric stealest away the purposes of wrath; and to the guilty man for one night givest back the hopes of his youth, and hands washed pure from blood; and to the proud man a brief oblivion for

> Wrongs undress'd and insults unavenged;

that summonest to the chancery of dreams, for the triumphs of suffering innocence, false witnesses; and confoundest perjury, and dost reverse the sentences of unrighteous judges;—thou buildest upon the bosom of darkness, out of the fantastic imagery of the brain, cities and temples beyond the art of Phidias and Praxiteles—beyond the splendour of Babylon and Hekatómpylos, and "from the anarchy of dreaming sleep" callest into sunny light the faces of long-

buried beauties and the blessed household countenances cleansed from the "dishonours of the grave." Thou only givest these gifts to man; and thou hast the keys of Paradise, oh, just, subtle, and mighty opium!

INTRODUCTION TO

THE PAINS OF OPIUM.

Courteous, and I hope indulgent, reader (for all *my* readers must be indulgent ones, or else I fear I shall shock them too much to count on their courtesy), having accompanied me thus far, now let me request you to move onwards for about eight years; that is to say, from 1804 (when I have said that my acquaintance with opium first began) to 1812. The years of academic life are now over and gone —almost forgotten; the student's cap no longer presses my temples; if my cap exist at all, it presses those of some youthful scholar, I trust, as happy as myself, and as passionate a lover of knowledge. My gown is by this time, I dare say, in the same condition with many thousand excellent books in the Bodleian, viz., diligently perused by certain studious moths and worms; or departed, however (which is all that I know of his fate), to that great reservoir of *somewhere* to which all the tea-cups, tea-caddies, tea-pots, tea-kettles, &c., have departed (not to speak of still frailer vessels, such as glasses, decanters, bed-makers, &c.), which occasional resemblances in the present generation of tea-cups, &c., remind me of having once possessed, but of whose departure and

final fate I, in common with most gownsmen of either university, could give, I suspect, but an obscure and conjectural history. The persecutions of the chapel-bell, sounding its unwelcome summons to six o'clock matins, interrupts my slumbers no longer, the porter who rang it, upon whose beautiful nose (bronze, inlaid with copper) I wrote, in retaliation so many Greek epigrams whilst I was dressing, is dead, and has ceased to disturb anybody; and I, and many others who suffered much from his tintinnabulous propensities, have now agreed to overlook his errors, and have forgiven him. Even with the bell I am now in charity; it rings, I suppose, as formerly, thrice a-day, and cruelly annoys, I doubt not, many worthy gentlemen, and disturbs their peace of mind; but as to me, in this year 1812, I regard its treacherous voice no longer (treacherous I call it, for, by some refinement of malice, it spoke in as sweet and silvery tones as if it had been inviting one to a party); its tones have no longer, indeed, power to reach me, let the wind sit as favourable as the malice of the bell itself could wish, for I am 250 miles away from it, and buried in the depth of mountains. And what am I doing among the mountains? Taking opium. Yes; but what else? Why, reader, in 1812, the year we are now arrived at, as well as for some years previous, I have been chiefly studying German metaphysics in the writings of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, &c. And how and in what manner do I live?—in short, what class or description of men do I belong to? I am at this period—viz. in 1812—living in a cottage and with a single female servant

(*honi soit qui mal y pense*), who amongst my neighbours passes by the name of my "housekeeper." And as a scholar and a man of learned education, and in that sense a gentleman, I may presume to class myself as an unworthy member of that indefinite body called *gentlemen*. Partly on the ground I have assigned perhaps, partly because from my having no visible calling or business, it is rightly judged that I must be living on my private fortune; I am so classed by my neighbours; and by the courtesy of modern England I am usually addressed on letters, &c., "Esquire," though having, I fear, in the rigorous construction of heralds, but slender pretensions to that distinguished honour; yet in popular estimation I am X. Y. Z., Esquire, but not Justice of the Peace nor Custos Rotulorum. Am I married? Not yet. And I still take opium? On Saturday nights. And perhaps have taken it unblushingly ever since "the rainy Sunday," and "the stately Pantheon," and "the beatific druggist" of 1804? Even so. And how do I find my health after all this opium-eating? In short, how do I do? Why, pretty well, I thank you, reader; in the phrase of ladies in the straw, "as well as can be expected." In fact, if I dared to say the real and simple truth, though, to satisfy the theories of medical men, I *ought* to be ill, I never was better in my life than in the spring of 1812; and I hope sincerely that the quantity of claret, port, or "particular Madeira," which in all probability you, good reader, have taken, and design to take for every term of eight years during your natural life, may as little disorder

your health as mine was disordered by the opium I had taken for eight years, between 1804 and 1812. Hence you may see again the danger of taking any medical advice from *Anastasius;* in divinity, for aught I know, or law, he may be a safe counsellor; but not in medicine. No; it is far better to consult Dr. Buchan, as I did; for I never forgot that worthy man's excellent suggestion, and I was "particularly careful not to take above five-and-twenty ounces of laudanum." To this moderation and temperate use of the article I may ascribe it, I suppose, that as yet, at least (*i.e.* in 1812), I am ignorant and unsuspicious of the avenging terrors which opium has in store for those who abuse its lenity. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that hitherto I have been only a dilettante eater of opium; eight years' practice even, with a single precaution of allowing sufficient intervals between every indulgence, has not been sufficient to make opium necessary to me as an article of daily diet. But now comes a different era. Move on, if you please, reader, to 1813. In the summer of the year we have just quitted I have suffered much in bodily health from distress of mind connected with a very melancholy event. This event being no ways related to the subject now before me, further than through the bodily illness which it produced, I need not more particularly notice. Whether this illness of 1812 had any share in that of 1813 I know not; but so it was, that in the latter year I was attacked by a most appalling irritation of the stomach, in all respects the same as that which had caused me so much suffering in

youth, and accompanied by a revival of all the old dreams. This is the point of my narrative on which, as respects my own self-justification, the whole of what follows may be said to hinge. And here I find myself in a perplexing dilemma. Either, on the one hand, I must exhaust the reader's patience by such a detail of my malady, or of my struggles with it, as might suffice to establish the fact of my inability to wrestle any longer with irritation and constant suffering; or, on the other hand, by passing lightly over this critical part of my story, I must forego the benefit of a stronger impression left on the mind of the reader, and must lay myself open to the misconstruction of having slipped, by the easy and gradual steps of self-indulging persons, from the first to the final stage of opium-eating (a misconstruction to which there will be a lurking predisposition in most readers, from my previons acknowledgements). This is the dilemma, the first horn of which would be sufficient to toss and gore any column of patient readers, though drawn up sixteen deep and constantly relieved by fresh men; consequently that is not to be thought of. It remains, then, that I *postulate* so much as is necessary for my purpose. And let me take as full credit for what I postulate as if I had demonstrated it, good reader, at the expense of your patience and my own. Be not so ungenerous as to let me suffer in your good opinion through my own forbearance and regard for your comfort. No; believe all that I ask of you—viz., that I could resist no longer; believe it liberally and as an act of grace, or else in mere

prudence ; for if not, then in the next edition of my Opium Confessions, revised and enlarged, I will make you believe and tremble ; and *à force d'ennuyer*, by mere dint of pandiculation I will terrify all readers of mine from ever again questioning any postulate that I shall think fit to make.

This, then, let me repeat, I postulate—that at the time I began to take opium daily I could not have done otherwise. Whether, indeed, afterwards I might not have succeeded in breaking off the habit, even when it seemed to me that all efforts would be unavailing, and whether many of the innumerable efforts which I *did* make might not have been carried much further, and my gradual reconquests of ground lost might not have been followed up much more energetically—these are questions which I must decline. Perhaps I might make out a case of palliation ; but shall I speak ingenuously ? I confess it as a besetting infirmity of mine, that I am too much of an Eudæmonist ; I hanker too much after a state of happiness, both for myself and others ; I cannot face misery, whether my own or not, with an eye of sufficient firmness, and am little capable of encountering present pain for the sake of any reversionary benefit. On some other matters I can agree with the gentlemen in the cotton trade * at Manchester in

* A handsome newsroom, of which I was very politely made free in passing through Manchester by several gentlemen of that place, is called, I think, *The Porch* ; whence I, who am a stranger in Manchester, inferred that the subscribers meant to profess themselves followers of Zeno. But I have been since assured that this is a mistake.

affecting the Stoic philosophy, but not in this. Here I take the liberty of an Eclectic philosopher, and I look out for some courteous and considerate sect that will condescend more to the infirm condition of an opium-eater ; that are "sweet men," as Chaucer says, "to give absolution," and will show some conscience in the penances they inflict, and the efforts of abstinence they exact from poor sinners like myself. An inhuman moralist I can no more endure in my nervous state than opium that has not been boiled. At any rate, he who summons me to send out a large freight of self-denial and mortification upon any cruising voyage of moral improvement, must make it clear to my understanding that the concern is a hopeful one. At my time of life (six-and-thirty years of age) it cannot be supposed that I have much energy to spare ; in fact, I find it all little enough for the intellectual labours I have on my hands, and therefore let no man expect to frighten me by a few hard words into embarking any part of it upon desperate adventures of morality.

Whether desperate or not, however, the issue of the struggle in 1813 was what I have mentioned, and from this date the reader is to consider me as a regular and confirmed opium-eater, of whom to ask whether on any particular day he had or had not taken opium, would be to ask whether his lungs had performed respiration, or the heart fulfilled its functions. You understand now, reader, what I am, and you are by this time aware that no old gentleman "with a snow-white beard" will have any chance of persuading me to surrender "the little golden re-

ceptacle of the pernicious drug." No ; I give notice to all, whether moralists or surgeons, that whatever be their pretensions and skill in their respective lines of practice, they must not hope for any countenance from me, if they think to begin by any savage proposition for a Lent or a Ramadan of abstinence from opium. This, then, being all fully understood between us, we shall in future sail before the wind. Now then, reader, from 1813, where all this time we have been sitting down and loitering, rise up, if you please, and walk forward about three years more. Now draw up the curtain, and you shall see me in a new character.

If any man, poor or rich, were to say that he would tell us what had been the happiest day in his life, and the why and the wherefore, I suppose that we should all cry out—Hear him! Hear him! As to the happiest *day*, that must be very difficult for any wise man to name, because any event that could occupy so distinguished a place in a man's retrospect of his life, or be entitled to have shed a special felicity on any one day, ought to be of such an enduring character as that (accidents apart) it should have continued to shed the same felicity, or one not distinguishably less, on many years together. To the happiest *lustrum*, however, or even to the happiest *year*, it may be allowed to any man to point without discountenance from wisdom. This year, in my case, reader, was the one which we have now reached ; though it stood, I confess, as a parenthesis between years of a gloomier character. It was a year of brilliant water (to speak after the manner of

jewellers), set as it were, and insulated, in the gloom and cloudy melancholy of opium. Strange as it may sound, I had a little before this time descended suddenly, and without any considerable effort, from 320 grains of opium (*i.e.* eight * thousand drops of laudanum) per day, to forty grains, or one-eighth part. Instantaneously, and as if by magic, the cloud of profoundest melancholy which rested upon my brain, like some black vapours that I have seen roll away from the summits of mountains, drew off in one day (*νυχθημερον*); passed off with its murky banners as simultaneously as a ship that has been stranded, and is floated off by a spring tide—

> That moveth altogether, if it move at all.

Now, then, I was again happy; I now took only 1000 drops of laudanum per day; and what was that? A latter spring had come to close up the season of youth; my brain performed its functions as healthily as ever before; I read Kant again, and again I understood him, or fancied that I did. Again my feelings of pleasure expanded themselves to all around me; and if any man from Oxford or Cambridge, or from neither, had been announced to

* I here reckon twenty-five drops of laudanum as equivalent to one grain of opium, which, I believe, is the common estimate. However, as both may be considered variable quantities (the crude opium varying much in strength, and the tincture still more), I suppose that no infinitesimal accuracy can be had in such a calculation. Teaspoons vary as much in size as opium in strength. Small ones hold about 100 drops; so that 8,000 drops are about eighty times a teaspoonful. The reader sees how much I kept within Dr. Buchan's indulgent allowance.

me in my unpretending cottage, I should have welcomed him with as sumptuous a reception as so poor a man could offer. Whatever else was wanting to a wise man's happiness, of laudanum I would have given him as much as he wished, and in a golden cup. And, by the way, now that I speak of giving laudanum away, I remember about this time a little incident, which I mention because, trifling as it was, the reader will soon meet it again in my dreams, which it influenced more fearfully than could be imagined. One day a Malay knocked at my door. What business a Malay could have to transact amongst English mountains I cannot conjecture; but possibly he was on his road to a seaport about forty miles distant.

The servant who opened the door to him was a young girl, born and bred amongst the mountains, who had never seen an Asiatic dress of any sort; his turban therefore confounded her not a little; and as it turned out that his attainments in English were exactly of the same extent as hers in the Malay, there seemed to be an impassable gulf fixed between all communication of ideas, if either party had happened to possess any. In this dilemma, the girl, recollecting the reputed learning of her master (and doubtless giving me credit for a knowledge of all the languages of the earth besides perhaps a few of the lunar ones), came and gave me to understand that there was a sort of demon below, whom she clearly imagined that my art could exorcise from the house. I did not immediately go down, but when I did, the group which

presented itself, arranged as it was by accident, though not very elaborate, took hold of my fancy and my eye in a way that none of the statuesque attitudes exhibited in the ballets at the Opera-house, though so ostentatiously complex, had ever done. In a cottage kitchen, but panelled on the wall with dark wood that from age and rubbing resembled oak, and looking more like a rustic hall of entrance than a kitchen, stood the Malay—his turban and loose trousers of dingy white relieved upon the dark panelling. He had placed himself nearer to the girl than she seemed to relish, though her native spirit of mountain intrepidity contended with the feeling of simple awe which her countenance expressed as she gazed upon the tiger-cat before her. And a more striking picture there could not be imagined than the beautiful English face of the girl, and its exquisite fairness, together with her erect and independent attitude, contrasted with the sallow and bilious skin of the Malay, enamelled or veneered with mahogany by marine air, his small, fierce, restless eyes, thin lips, slavish gestures and adorations. Half-hidden by the ferocious-looking Malay was a little child from a neighbouring cottage who had crept in after him, and was now in the act of reverting its head and gazing upwards at the turban and the fiery eyes beneath it, whilst with one hand he caught at the dress of the young woman for protection. My knowledge of the Oriental tongues is not remarkably extensive, being indeed confined to two words—the Arabic word for barley and the Turkish for opium (madjoon), which I have learned from *Anastasius;*

and as I had neither a Malay dictionary nor even Adelung's *Mithridates*, which might have helped me to a few words, I addressed him in some lines from the Iliad, considering that, of such languages as I possessed, Greek, in point of longitude, came geographically nearest to an Oriental one. He worshipped me in a most devout manner, and replied in what I suppose was Malay. In this way I saved my reputation with my neighbours, for the Malay had no means of betraying the secret. He lay down upon the floor for about an hour, and then pursued his journey. On his departure I presented him with a piece of opium. To him, as an Orientalist, I concluded that opium must be familiar; and the expression of his face convinced me that it was. Nevertheless, I was struck with some little consternation when I saw him suddenly raise his hand to his mouth, and, to use the schoolboy phrase, bolt the whole, divided into three pieces, at one mouthful. The quantity was enough to kill three dragoons and their horses, and I felt some alarm for the poor creature; but what could be done? I had given him the opium in compassion for his solitary life, on recollecting that if he had travelled on foot from London it must be nearly three weeks since he could have exchanged a thought with any human being. I could not think of violating the laws of hospitality by having him seized and drenched with an emetic, and thus frightening him into a notion that we were going to sacrifice him to some English idol. No: there was clearly no help for it. He took his leave, and for some days I felt anxious, but as I never

heard of any Malay being found dead, I became convinced that he was used * to opium ; and that I must have done him the service I designed by giving him one night of respite from the pains of wandering.

This incident I have digressed to mention, because this Malay (partly from the picturesque exhibition he assisted to frame, partly from the anxiety I connected with his image for some days) fastened afterwards upon my dreams, and brought other Malays with him, worse than himself, that ran "a-muck" † at me, and led me into a world of troubles. But to quit this episode, and to return to my intercalary year of happiness. I have said already, that on a subject so important to us all as happiness, we should listen with pleasure to any man's experience or experiments, even though he were but a plough-boy, who cannot be supposed to have ploughed very deep into

* This, however, is not a necessary conclusion ; the varieties of effect produced by opium on different constitutions are infinite. A London magistrate (Harriott's *Struggles through Life*, vol. iii. p. 391, third edition) has recorded that, on the first occasion of his trying laudanum for the gout he took *forty* drops, the next night *sixty*, and on the fifth night *eighty*, without any effect whatever ; and this at an advanced age. I have an anecdote from a country surgeon, however, which sinks Mr. Harriott's case into a trifle ; and in my projected medical treatise on opium, which I will publish provided the College of Surgeons will pay me for enlightening their benighted understandings upon this subject, I will relate it ; but it is far too good a story to be published gratis.

† See the common accounts in any Eastern traveller or voyager of the frantic excesses committed by Malays who have taken opium, or are reduced to desperation by ill-luck at gambling.

such an intractable soil as that of human pains and pleasures, or to have conducted his researches upon any very enlightened principles. But I who have taken happiness both in a solid and liquid shape, both boiled and unboiled, both East India and Turkey—who have conducted my experiments upon this interesting subject with a sort of galvanic battery, and have, for the general benefit of the world, inoculated myself, as it were, with the poison of 8000 drops of laudanum per day (just for the same reason as a French surgeon inoculated himself lately with cancer, an English one twenty years ago with plague, and a third, I know not of what nation, with hydrophobia), I (it will be admitted) must surely know what happiness is, if anybody does. And therefore I will here lay down an analysis of happiness; and as the most interesting mode of communicating it, I will give it, not didactically, but wrapped up and involved in a picture of one evening, as I spent every evening during the intercalary year when laudanum, though taken daily, was to me no more than the elixir of pleasure. This done, I shall quit the subject of happiness altogether, and pass to a very different one—the *pains of opium.*

Let there be a cottage standing in a valley, eighteen miles from any town—no spacious valley, but about two miles long by three-quarters of a mile in average width; the benefit of which provision is, that all the family resident within its circuit will compose, as it were, one larger household, personally familiar to your eye, and more or less interesting to your affections. Let the mountains

be real mountains, between 3,000 and 4,000 feet high, and the cottage a real cottage, not (as a witty author has it) "a cottage with a double coach-house;" let it be, in fact (for I must abide by the actual scene), a white cottage, embowered with flowering shrubs, so chosen as to unfold a succession of flowers upon the walls and clustering round the windows through all the months of spring, summer, and autumn—beginning, in fact, with May roses, and ending with jasmine. Let it, however, *not* be spring, nor summer, nor autumn, but winter in his sternest shape. This is a most important point in the science of happiness. And I am surprised to see people overlook it, and think it matter of congratulation that winter is going, or, if coming, is not likely to be a severe one. On the contrary, I put up a petition annually for as much snow, hail, frost, or storm, of one kind or other, as the skies can possibly afford us. Surely everybody is aware of the divine pleasures which attend a winter fireside, candles at four o'clock, warm hearth-rugs, tea, a fair tea-maker, shutters closed, curtains flowing in ample draperies on the floor, whilst the wind and rain are raging audibly without,

> And at the doors and windows seem to call,
> As heav'n and earth they would together mell;
> Yet the least entrance find they none at all;
> Whence sweeter grows our rest secure in massy hall.
>
> *Castle of Indolence.*

All these are items in the description of a winter evening which must surely be familiar to everybody born in a high latitude. And it is evident that

most of these delicacies, like ice-cream, require a very low temperature of the atmosphere to produce them; they are fruits which cannot be ripened without weather stormy or inclement in some way or other. I am not "*particular*," as people say, whether it be snow, or black frost, or wind so strong that (as Mr. —— says) "you may lean your back against it like a post." I can put up even with rain, provided it rains cats and dogs; but something of the sort I must have, and if I have it not, I think myself in a manner ill-used; for why am I called on to pay so heavily for winter, in coals and candles, and various privations that will occur even to gentlemen, if I am not to have the article good of its kind? No, a Canadian winter for my money, or a Russian one, where every man is but a co-proprietor with the north wind in the fee-simple of his own ears. Indeed, so great an epicure am I in this matter that I cannot relish a winter night fully if it be much past St. Thomas's day, and have degenerated into disgusting tendencies to vernal appearances. No, it must be divided by a thick wall of dark nights from all return of light and sunshine. From the latter weeks of October to Christmas Eve, therefore, is the period during which happiness is in season, which, in my judgment, enters the room with the tea-tray; for tea, though ridiculed by those who are naturally of coarse nerves, or are become so from wine-drinking, and are not susceptible of influence from so refined a stimulant, will always be the favourite beverage of the intellectual; and, for my part, I would have joined Dr. Johnson in a *bellum internecinum* against Jonas

Hanway, or any other impious person, who should presume to disparage it. But here, to save myself the trouble of too much verbal description, I will introduce a painter, and give him directions for the rest of the picture. Painters do not like white cottages, unless a good deal weather-stained; but as the reader now understands that it is a winter night, his services will not be required except for the inside of the house.

Paint me, then, a room seventeen feet by twelve, and not more than seven and a half feet high. This, reader, is somewhat ambitiously styled in my family the drawing-room; but being contrived "a double debt to pay," it is also, and more justly, termed the library, for it happens that books are the only article of property in which I am richer than my neighbours. Of these I have about five thousand, collected gradually since my eighteenth year. Therefore, painter, put as many as you can into this room. Make it populous with books, and, furthermore, paint me a good fire, and furniture plain and modest, befitting the unpretending cottage of a scholar. And near the fire paint me a tea-table, and (as it is clear that no creature can come to see one such a stormy night) place only two cups and saucers on the tea-tray; and, if you know how to paint such a thing symbolically or otherwise, paint me an eternal tea-pot—eternal *à parte ante* and *à parte post*—for I usually drink tea from eight o'clock at night to four o'clock in the morning. And as it is very unpleasant to make tea or to pour it out for oneself, paint me a lovely young woman sitting at the table.

Paint her arms like Aurora's and her smiles like Hebe's. But no, dear M., not even in jest let me insinuate that thy power to illuminate my cottage rests upon a tenure so perishable as mere personal beauty, or that the witchcraft of angelic smiles lies within the empire of any earthly pencil. Pass then, my good painter, to something more within its power; and the next article brought forward should naturally be myself—a picture of the Opium-eater, with his "little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug" lying beside him on the table. As to the opium, I have no objection to see a picture of *that*, though I would rather see the original. You may paint it if you choose, but I apprise you that no "little" receptacle would, even in 1816, answer *my* purpose, who was at a distance from the "stately Pantheon," and all druggists (mortal or otherwise). No, you may as well paint the real receptacle, which was not of gold, but of glass, and as much like a wine-decanter as possible. Into this you may put a quart of ruby-coloured laudanum; that, and a book of German Metaphysics placed by its side, will sufficiently attest my being in the neighbourhood. But as to myself—there I demur. I admit that, naturally, I ought to occupy the foreground of the picture; that being the hero of the piece, or (if you choose) the criminal at the bar, my body should be had into court. This seems reasonable; but why should I confess on this point to a painter? or why confess at all? If the public (into whose private ear I am confidentially whispering my confessions, and not into any painter's) should chance to have framed

some agreeable picture for itself of the Opium-eater's exterior, should have ascribed to him, romantically, an elegant person or a handsome face, why should I barbarously tear from it so pleasing a delusion—pleasing both to the public and to me? No; paint me, if at all, according to your own fancy, and as a painter's fancy should teem with beautiful creations, I cannot fail in that way to be a gainer. And now, reader, we have run through all the ten categories of my condition as it stood about 1816–17, up to the middle of which latter year I judge myself to have been a happy man, and the elements of that happiness I have endeavoured to place before you in the above sketch of the interior of a scholar's library, in a cottage among the mountains, on a stormy winter evening.

But now, farewell—a long farewell—to happiness, winter or summer! Farewell to smiles and laughter! Farewell to peace of mind! Farewell to hope and to tranquil dreams, and to the blessed consolations of sleep. For more than three years and a half I am summoned away from these. I am now arrived at an Iliad of woes, for I have now to record

The Pains of Opium.

> As when some great painter dips
> His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.
> SHELLEY'S *Revolt of Islam.*

Reader, who have thus far accompanied me, I must request your attention to a brief explanatory note on three points:

1. For several reasons I have not been able to compose the notes for this part of my narrative into any regular and connected shape. I give the notes disjointed as I find them, or have now drawn them up from memory. Some of them point to their own date, some I have dated, and some are undated. Whenever it could answer my purpose to transplant them from the natural or chronological order, I have not scrupled to do so. Sometimes I speak in the present, sometimes in the past tense. Few of the notes, perhaps, were written exactly at the period of time to which they relate; but this can little affect their accuracy, as the impressions were such that they can never fade from my mind. Much has been omitted. I could not, without effort, constrain myself to the task of either recalling, or constructing into a regular narrative, the whole burthen of horrors which lies upon my brain. This feeling partly I plead in excuse, and partly that I am now in London, and am a helpless sort of person, who cannot even arrange his own papers without assistance; and I am separated from the hands which are wont to perform for me the offices of an amanuensis.

2. You will think perhaps that I am too confidential and communicative of my own private history. It may be so. But my way of writing is rather to think aloud, and follow my own humours, than much to consider who is listening to me; and if I stop to consider what is proper to be said to this or that person, I shall soon come to doubt whether any part at all is proper. The fact is, I place myself at a distance of fifteen or twenty years ahead of this

time, and suppose myself writing to those who will be interested about me hereafter; and wishing to have some record of time, the entire history of which no one can know but myself, I do it as fully as I am able with the efforts I am now capable of making, because I know not whether I can ever find time to do it again.

3. It will occur to you often to ask, why did I not release myself from the horrors of opium by leaving it off or diminishing it? To this I must answer briefly: it might be supposed that I yielded to the fascinations of opium too easily; it cannot be supposed that any man can be charmed by its terrors. The reader may be sure, therefore, that I made attempts innumerable to reduce the quantity. I add, that those who witnessed the agonies of those attempts, and not myself, were the first to beg me to desist. But could not have I reduced it a drop a day, or, by adding water, have bisected or trisected a drop? A thousand drops bisected would thus have taken nearly six years to reduce, and that way would certainly not have answered. But this is a common mistake of those who know nothing of opium experimentally; I appeal to those who do, whether it is not always found that down to a certain point it can be reduced with ease and even pleasure, but that after that point further reduction causes intense suffering. Yes, say many thoughtless persons, who know not what they are talking of, you will suffer a little low spirits and dejection for a few days. I answer, no; there is nothing like low spirits; on the contrary, the mere animal spirits are

uncommonly raised: the pulse is improved: the health is better. It is not there that the suffering lies. It has no resemblance to the sufferings caused by renouncing wine. It is a state of unutterable irritation of stomach (which surely is not much like dejection), accompanied by intense perspirations, and feelings such as I shall not attempt to describe without more space at my command.

I shall now enter *in medias res,* and shall anticipate, from a time when my opium pains might be said to be at their *acmé,* an account of their palsying effects on the intellectual faculties.

My studies have now been long interrupted. I cannot read to myself with any pleasure, hardly with a moment's endurance. Yet I read aloud sometimes for the pleasure of others, because reading is an accomplishment of mine, and, in the slang use of the word "accomplishment" as a superficial and ornamental attainment, almost the only one I possess; and formerly, if I had any vanity at all connected with any endowment or attainment of mine, it was with this, for I had observed that no accomplishment was so rare. Players are the worst readers of all: —— reads vilely; and Mrs. ——, who is so celebrated, can read nothing well but dramatic compositions: Milton she cannot read sufferably. People in general either read poetry without any passion at all, or else overstep the modesty of nature, and read not like scholars. Of late, if I have felt moved by anything

in books, it has been by the grand lamentations of Samson Agonistes, or the great harmonies of the Satanic speeches in Paradise Regained, when read aloud by myself. A young lady sometimes comes and drinks tea with us: at her request and M.'s, I now and then read W——'s poems to them. (W., by-the-bye is the only poet I ever met who could read his own verses: often indeed he reads admirably.)

For nearly two years I believe that I read no book but one; and I owe it to the author, in discharge of a great debt of gratitude, to mention what that was. The sublimer and more passionate poets I still read, as I have said, by snatches, and occasionally. But my proper vocation, as I well know, was the exercise of the analytic understanding. Now, for the most part analytic studies are continuous, and not to be pursued by fits and starts, or fragmentary efforts. Mathematics, for instance, intellectual philosophy, &c., were all become insupportable to me; I shrunk from them with a sense of powerless and infantine feebleness that gave me an anguish the greater from remembering the time when I grappled with them to my own hourly delight; and for this further reason, because I had devoted the labour of my whole life, and had dedicated my intellect, blossoms and fruits, to the slow and elaborate toil of constructing one single work, to which I had presumed to give the title of an unfinished work of Spinosa's—viz., *De Emendatione Humani Intellectus.* This was now lying locked up, as by frost, like any Spanish bridge or aqueduct,

begun upon too great a scale for the resources of the architect; and instead of reviving me as a monument of wishes at least, and aspirations, and a life of labour dedicated to the exaltation of human nature in that way in which God had best fitted me to promote so great an object, it was likely to stand a memorial to my children of hopes defeated, of baffled efforts, of materials uselessly accumulated, of foundations laid that were never to support a superstructure—of the grief and the ruin of the architect. In this state of imbecility I had, for amusement, turned my attention to political economy; my understanding, which formerly had been as active and restless as a hyæna, could not, I suppose (so long as I lived at all) sink into utter lethargy; and political economy offers this advantage to a person in my state, that though it is eminently an organic science (no part, that is to say, but what acts on the whole as the whole again reacts on each part), yet the several parts may be detached and contemplated singly. Great as was the prostration of my powers at this time, yet I could not forget my knowledge; and my understanding had been for too many years intimate with severe thinkers, with logic, and the great masters of knowledge, not to be aware of the utter feebleness of the main herd of modern economists. I had been led in 1811 to look into loads of books and pamphlets on many branches of economy; and, at my desire, M. sometimes read to me chapters from more recent works, or parts of parliamentary debates. I saw that these were generally the very dregs and rinsings of the

human intellect; and that any man of sound head, and practised in wielding logic with a scholastic adroitness, might take up the whole academy of modern economists, and throttle them between heaven and earth with his finger and thumb, or bray their fungus-heads to powder with a lady's fan. At length, in 1819, a friend in Edinburgh sent me down Mr. Ricardo's book; and recurring to my own prophetic anticipation of the advent of some legislator for this science, I said, before I had finished the first chapter, "Thou art the man!" Wonder and curiosity were emotions that had long been dead in me. Yet I wondered once more: I wondered at myself that I could once again be stimulated to the effort of reading, and much more I wondered at the book. Had this profound work been really written in England during the nineteenth century? Was it possible? I supposed thinking * had been extinct in England. Could it be that an Englishman, and he not in academic bowers, but oppressed by mercantile and senatorial cares, had accomplished what all the universities of Europe and a century of thought had failed even to advance by one hair's breadth? All other writers had been crushed and overlaid by the enormous weight of facts and docu-

* The reader must remember what I here mean by *thinking*, because else this would be a very presumptuous expression. England, of late, has been rich to excess in fine thinkers, in the departments of creative and combining thought; but there is a sad dearth of masculine thinkers in any analytic path. A Scotchman of eminent name has lately told us that he is obliged to quit even mathematics for want of encouragement.

ments. Mr. Ricardo had deduced *à priori* from the understanding itself laws which first gave a ray of light into the unwieldy chaos of materials, and had constructed what had been but a collection of tentative discussions into a science of regular proportions, now first standing on an eternal basis.

Thus did one single work of a profound understanding avail to give me a pleasure and an activity which I had not known for years. It roused me even to write, or at least to dictate what M. wrote for me. It seemed to me that some important truths had escaped even "the inevitable eye" of Mr. Ricardo; and as these were for the most part of such a nature that I could express or illustrate them more briefly and elegantly by algebraic symbols than in the usual clumsy and loitering diction of economists, the whole would not have filled a pocket-book; and being so brief, with M. for my amanuensis, even at this time, incapable as I was of all general exertion, I drew up my *Prolegomena to all future Systems of Political Economy.* I hope it will not be found redolent of opium; though, indeed, to most people the subject is a sufficient opiate.

This exertion, however, was but a temporary flash, as the sequel showed; for I designed to publish my work. Arrangements were made at a provincial press, about eighteen miles distant, for printing it. An additional compositor was retained for some days on this account. The work was even twice advertised, and I was in a manner pledged to the fulfilment of my intention. But I had a preface to write, and a dedication, which I wished to make a splendid

one, to Mr. Ricardo. I found myself quite unable to accomplish all this. The arrangements were countermanded, the compositor dismissed, and my "Prolegomena" rested peacefully by the side of its elder and more dignified brother.

I have thus described and illustrated my intellectual torpor in terms that apply more or less to every part of the four years during which I was under the Circean spells of opium. But for misery and suffering, I might indeed be said to have existed in a dormant state. I seldom could prevail on myself to write a letter ; an answer of a few words to any that I received was the utmost that I could accomplish, and often *that* not until the letter had lain weeks or even months on my writing-table. Without the aid of M. all records of bills paid or *to be* paid must have perished, and my whole domestic economy, whatever became of Political Economy, must have gone into irretrievable confusion. I shall not afterwards allude to this part of the case. It is one, however, which the opium-eater will find, in the end, as oppressive and tormenting as any other, from the sense of incapacity and feebleness, from the direct embarrassments incident to the neglect or procrastination of each day's appropriate duties, and from the remorse which must often exasperate the stings of these evils to a reflective and conscientious mind. The opium-eater loses none of his moral sensibilities or aspirations. He wishes and longs as earnestly as ever to realize what he believes possible, and feels to be exacted by duty ; but his intellectual apprehension of what is possible infinitely outruns his

power, not of execution only, but even of power to attempt. He lies under the weight of incubus and nightmare ; he lies in sight of all that he would fain perform, just as a man forcibly confined to his bed by the mortal languor of a relaxing disease, who is compelled to witness injury or outrage offered to some object of his tenderest love : he curses the spells which chain him down from motion ; he would lay down his life if he might but get up and walk ; but he is powerless as an infant, and cannot even attempt to rise.

I now pass to what is the main subject of these latter confessions, to the history and journal of what took place in my dreams, for these were the immediate and proximate cause of my acutest suffering.

The first notice I had of any important change going on in this part of my physical economy was from the reawakening of a state of eye generally incident to childhood or exalted states of irritability. I know not whether my reader is aware that many children, perhaps most, have a power of painting, as it were upon the darkness, all sorts of phantoms. In some that power is simply a mechanical affection of the eye ; others have a voluntary or semi-voluntary power to dismiss or to summon them ; or, as a child once said to me when I questioned him on this matter, "I can tell them to go, and they go ; but sometimes they come when I don't tell them to come," Whereupon I told him that he had almost as unlimited a command over apparitions as a Roman centurion over his soldiers.—In the middle of 1817, I think it was, that this faculty became positively distressing to

me : at night, when I lay awake in bed, vast processions passed along in mournful pomp ; friezes of never-ending stories, that to my feelings were as sad and solemn as if they were stories drawn from times before Œdipus or Priam, before Tyre, before Memphis. And at the same time a corresponding change took place in my dreams ; a theatre seemed suddenly opened and lighted up within my brain, which presented nightly spectacles of more than earthly splendour. And the four following facts may be mentioned as noticeable at this time :

1. That as the creative state of the eye increased, a sympathy seemed to arise between the waking and the dreaming states of the brain in one point—that whatsoever I happened to call up and to trace by a voluntary act upon the darkness was very apt to transfer itself to my dreams, so that I feared to exercise this faculty; for, as Midas turned all things to gold that yet baffled his hopes and defrauded his human desires, so whatsoever things capable of being visually represented I did but think of in the darkness, immediately shaped themselves into phantoms of the eye; and by a process apparently no less inevitable, when thus once traced in faint and visionary colours, like writings in sympathetic ink, they were drawn out by the fierce chemistry of my dreams into insufferable splendour that fretted my heart.

2. For this and all other changes in my dreams were accompanied by deep-seated anxiety and gloomy melancholy, such as are wholly incommunicable by words. I seemed every night to descend, not metaphorically, but literally to descend, into chasms and

sunless abysses, depths below depths, from which it seemed hopeless that I could ever reascend. Nor did I, by waking, feel that I *had* reascended. This I do not dwell upon ; because the state of gloom which attended these gorgeous spectacles, amounting at last to utter darkness, as of some suicidal despondency, cannot be approached by words.

3. The sense of space, and in the end the sense of time, were both powerfully affected. Buildings, landscapes, &c., were exhibited in proportions so vast as the bodily eye is not fitted to receive. Space swelled, and was amplified to an extent of unutterable infinity. This, however, did not disturb me so much as the vast expansion of time ; I sometimes seemed to have lived for 70 or 100 years in one night—nay, sometimes had feelings representative of a millennium passed in that time, or, however, of a duration far beyond the limits of any human experience.

4. The minutest incidents of childhood, or forgotten scenes of later years, were often revived : I could not be said to recollect them, for if I had been told of them when waking, I should not have been able to acknowledge them as parts of my past experience. But placed as they were before me, in dreams like intuitions, and clothed in all their evanescent circumstances and accompanying feelings, I *recognised* them instantaneously. I was once told by a near relative of mine, that having in her childhood fallen into a river, and being on the very verge of death but for the critical assistance which reached her, she saw in a moment her whole life, in its

minutest incidents, arrayed before her simultaneously as in a mirror ; and she had a faculty developed as suddenly for comprehending the whole and every part. This, from some opium experiences of mine, I can believe ; I have indeed seen the same thing asserted twice in modern books, and accompanied by a remark which I am convinced is true ; viz., that the dread book of account which the Scriptures speak of is in fact the mind itself of each individual. Of this at least I feel assured, that there is no such thing as *forgetting* possible to the mind ; a thousand accidents may and will interpose a veil between our present consciousness and the secret inscriptions on the mind ; accidents of the same sort will also rend away this veil ; but alike, whether veiled or unveiled, the inscription remains for ever, just as the stars seem to withdraw before the common light of day, whereas in fact we all know that it is the light which is drawn over them as a veil, and that they are waiting to be revealed when the obscuring daylight shall have withdrawn.

Having noticed these four facts as memorably distinguishing my dreams from those of health, I shall now cite a case illustrative of the first fact, and shall then cite any others that I remember, either in their chronological order, or any other that may give them more effect as pictures to the reader.

I had been in youth, and even since, for occasional amusement, a great reader of Livy, whom I confess that I prefer, both for style and matter, to any other of the Roman historians ; and I had often felt as most solemn and appalling sounds, and most em-

phatically representative of the majesty of the Romam people, the two words so often occurring in Livy—*Consul Romanus*, especially when the consul is introduced in his military character. I mean to say that the words king, sultan, regent, &c., or any other titles of those who embody in their own persons the collective majesty of a great people, had less power over my reverential feelings. I had also, though no great reader of history, made myself minutely and critically familiar with one period of English history, viz., the period of the Parliamentary War, having been attracted by the moral grandeur of some who figured in that day, and by the many interesting memoirs which survive those unquiet times. Both these parts of my lighter reading, having furnished me often with matter of reflection, now furnished me with matter for my dreams. Often I used to see, after painting upon the blank darkness a sort of rehearsal whilst waking, a crowd of ladies, and perhaps a festival and dances. And I heard it said, or I said to myself, "These are English ladies from the unhappy times of Charles I. These are the wives and the daughters of those who met in peace, and sate at the same table, and were allied by marriage or by blood; and yet, after a certain day in August 1642, never smiled upon each other again, nor met but in the field of battle; and at Marston Moor, at Newbury, or at Naseby, cut asunder all ties of love by the cruel sabre, and washed away in blood the memory of ancient friendship." The ladies danced, and looked as lovely as the court of George IV. Yet I knew, even in my dream, that

they had been in the grave for nearly two centuries. This pageant would suddenly dissolve ; and at a clapping of hands would be heard the heart-quaking sound of *Consul Romanus ;* and immediately came "sweeping by," in gorgeous paludaments, Paulus or Marius, girt round by a company of centurions, with the crimson tunic hoisted on a spear, and followed by the *alalagmos* of the Roman legions.

Many years ago, when I was looking over Piranesi's Antiquities of Rome, Mr. Coleridge, who was standing by, described to me a set of plates by that artist, called his *Dreams,* and which record the scenery of his own visions during the delirium of a fever. Some of them (I describe only from memory of Mr. Coleridge's account) represented vast Gothic halls, on the floor of which stood all sorts of engines and machinery, wheels, cables, pulleys, levers, catapults, &c. &c., expressive of enormous power put forth and resistance overcome. Creeping along the sides of the walls you perceived a staircase ; and upon it, groping his way upwards, was Piranesi himself : follow the stairs a little further and you perceive it come to a sudden and abrupt termination without any balustrade, and allowing no step onwards to him who had reached the extremity except into the depths below. Whatever is to become of poor Piranesi, you suppose at least that his labours must in some way terminate here. But raise your eyes, and behold a second flight of stairs still higher, on which again Piranesi is perceived, but this time standing on the very brink of the abyss. Again elevate your eye, and a still more aërial flight of

stairs is beheld, and again is poor Piranesi busy on his aspiring labours; and so on, until the unfinished stairs and Piranesi both are lost in the upper gloom of the hall. With the same power of endless growth and self-reproduction did my architecture proceed in dreams. In the early stage of my malady the splendours of my dreams were indeed chiefly architectural; and I beheld such pomp of cities and palaces as was never yet beheld by the waking eye unless in the clouds. From a great modern poet I cite part of a passage which describes, as an appearance actually beheld in the clouds, what in many of its circumstances I saw frequently in sleep:

> The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
> Was of a mighty city—boldly say
> A wilderness of building, sinking far
> And self-withdrawn into a wondrous depth,
> Far sinking into splendour—without end!
> Fabric it seem'd of diamond, and of gold,
> With alabaster domes, and silver spires,
> And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
> Uplifted; here, serene pavilions bright
> In avenues disposed; there towers begirt
> With battlements that on their restless fronts
> Bore stars—illumination of all gems!
> By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
> Upon the dark materials of the storm
> Now pacified; on them, and on the coves,
> And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
> The vapours had receded,—taking there
> Their station under a cerulean sky. &c. &c.

The sublime circumstance, "battlements that on their *restless* fronts bore stars," might have been copied from my architectural dreams, for it often

occurred. We hear it reported of Dryden and of Fuseli, in moderu times, that they thought proper to eat raw meat for the sake of obtaining splendid dreams: how much better for such a purpose to have eaten opium, which yet I do not remember that any poet is recorded to have done, except the dramatist Shadwell; and in ancient days Homer is I think rightly reputed to have known the virtues of opium.

To my architecture succeeded dreams of lakes and silvery expanses of water: these haunted me so much that I feared (though possibly it will appear ludicrous to a medical man) that some dropsical state or tendency of the brain might thus be making itself (to use a metaphysical word) *objective;* and the sentient organ *project* itself as its own object. For two months I suffered greatly in my head, a part of my bodily structure which had hitherto been so clear from all touch or taint of weakness (physically I mean) that I used to say of it, as the last Lord Orford said of his stomach, that it seemed likely to survive the rest of my person. Till now I had never felt a headache even, or any the slightest pain, except rheumatic pains caused by my own folly. However, I got over this attack, though it must have been verging on something very dangerous.

The waters now changed their character—from translucent lakes shining like mirrors they now became seas and oceans. And now came a tremendous change, which, unfolding itself slowly like a scroll through many months, promised an abiding

torment; and in fact it never left me until the winding up of my case. Hitherto the human face had mixed often in my dreams, but not despotically nor with any special power of tormenting. But now that which I have called the tyranny of the human face began to unfold itself. Perhaps some part of my London life might be answerable for this. Be that as it may, now it was that upon the rocking waters of the ocean the human face began to appear; the sea appeared paved with innumerable faces upturned to the heavens—faces imploring, wrathful, despairing, surged upwards by thousands, by myriads, by generations, by centuries: my agitation was infinite; my mind tossed and surged with the ocean.

May 1818.

The Malay has been a fearful enemy for months. I have been every night, through his means, transported into Asiatic scenes. I know not whether others share in my feelings on this point; but I have often thought that if I were compelled to forego England, and to live in China, and among Chinese manners and modes of life and scenery, I should go mad. The causes of my horror lie deep, and some of them must be common to others. Southern Asia in general is the seat of awful images and associations. As the cradle of the human race, it would alone have a dim and reverential feeling connected with it. But there are other reasons. No man can pretend that the wild, barbarous, and capricious superstitions of Africa, or of savage tribes elsewhere,

affect him in the way that he is affected by the ancient, monumental, cruel, and elaborate religions of Indostan, &c. The mere antiquity of Asiatic things, of their institutions, histories, modes of faith, &c., is so impressive, that to me the vast age of the race and name overpowers the sense of youth in the individual. A young Chinese seems to me an ante-diluvian man renewed. Even Englishmen, though not bred in any knowledge of such institutions, cannot but shudder at the mystic sublimity of *castes* that have flowed apart, and refused to mix, through such immemorial tracts of time; nor can any man fail to be awed by the names of the Ganges or the Euphrates. It contributes much to these feelings that southern Asia is, and has been for thousands of years, the part of the earth most swarming with human life, the great *officina gentium*. Man is a weed in those regions. The vast empires also in which the enormous population of Asia has always been cast, give a further sublimity to the feelings associated with all Oriental names or images. In China, over and above what it has in common with the rest of southern Asia, I am terrified by the modes of life, by the manners, and the barrier of utter abhorrence and want of sympathy placed between us by feelings deeper than I can analyse. I could sooner live with lunatics or brute animals. All this, and much more than I can say or have time to say, the reader must enter into before he can comprehend the unimaginable horror which these dreams of Oriental imagery and mythological tortures impressed upon me. Under the connecting feeling

of tropical heat and vertical sunlights I brought together all creatures, birds, beasts, reptiles, all trees and plants, usages and appearances, that are found in all tropical regions, and assembled them together in China or Indostan. From kindred feelings, I soon brought Egypt and all her gods under the same law. I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by parroquets, by cockatoos. I ran into pagodas, and was fixed for centuries at the summit or in secret rooms: I was the idol; I was the priest; I was worshipped; I was sacrificed. I fled from the wrath of Brama through all the forests of Asia: Vishnu hated me: Seeva laid wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris: I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. I was buried for a thousand years in stone coffins, with mummies and sphynxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids. I was kissed, with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles; and laid, confounded with all unutterable slimy things, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud.

I thus give the reader some slight abstraction of my Oriental dreams, which always filled me with such amazement at the monstrous scenery that horror seemed absorbed for a while in sheer astonishment. Sooner or later came a reflux of feeling that swallowed up the astonishment, and left me not so much in terror as in hatred and abomination of what I saw. Over every form, and threat, and punishment, and dim sightless incarceration, brooded a sense of eternity and infinity that drove me into an oppression

as of madness. Into these dreams only it was, with one or two slight exceptions, that any circumstances of physical horror entered. All before had been moral and spiritual terrors. But here the main agents were ugly birds, or snakes, or crocodiles; especially the last. The cursed crocodile became to me the object of more horror than almost all the rest. I was compelled to live with him, and (as was always the case almost in my dreams) for centuries. I escaped sometimes, and found myself in Chinese houses, with cane tables, &c. All the feet of the tables, sofas, &c., soon became instinct with life: the abominable head of the crocodile, and his leering eyes, looked out at me, multiplied into a thousand repetitions; and I stood loathing and fascinated. And so often did this hideous reptile haunt my dreams that many times the very same dream was broken up in the very same way: I heard gentle voices speaking to me (I hear everything when I am sleeping), and instantly I awoke. It was broad noon, and my children were standing, hand in hand, at my bedside—come to show me their coloured shoes, or new frocks, or to let me see them dressed for going out. I protest that so awful was the transition from the damned crocodile, and the other unutterable monsters and abortions of my dreams, to the sight of innocent *human* natures and of infancy, that in the mighty and sudden revulsion of mind I wept, and could not forbear it, as I kissed their faces.

June 1819.

I have had occasion to remark, at various periods of my life, that the deaths of those whom we love, and indeed the contemplation of death generally, is (*cæteris paribus*) more affecting in summer than in any other season of the year. And the reasons are these three, I think: first, that the visible heavens in summer appear far higher, more distant, and (if such a solecism may be excused) more infinite; the clouds, by which chiefly the eye expounds the distance of the blue pavilion stretched over our heads, are in summer more voluminous, massed and accumulated in far grander and more towering piles. Secondly, the light and the appearances of the declining and the setting sun are much more fitted to be types and characters of the Infinite. And thirdly (which is the main reason), the exuberant and riotous prodigality of life naturally forces the mind more powerfully upon the antagonist thought of death, and the wintry sterility of the grave. For it may be observed generally, that wherever two thoughts stand related to each other by a law of antagonism, and exist, as it were, by mutual repulsion, they are apt to suggest each other. On these accounts it is that I find it impossible to banish the thought of death when I am walking alone in the endless days of summer; and any particular death, if not more affecting, at least haunts my mind more obstinately and besiegingly in that season. Perhaps this cause, and a slight incident which I omit, might have been the immediate occasions of the following dream, to which, how-

ever, a predisposition must always have existed in my mind; but having been once roused it never left me, and split into a thousand fantastic varieties, which often suddenly reunited, and composed again the original dream.

I thought that it was a Sunday morning in May, that it was Easter Sunday, and as yet very early in the morning. I was standing, as it seemed to me, at the door of my own cottage. Right before me lay the very scene which could really be commanded from that situation, but exalted, as was usual, and solemnised by the power of dreams. There were the same mountains, and the same lovely valley at their feet; but the mountains were raised to more than Alpine height, and there was interspace far larger between them of meadows and forest lawns; the hedges were rich with white roses; and no living creature was to be seen, excepting that in the green churchyard there were cattle tranquilly reposing upon the verdant graves, and particularly round about the grave of a child whom I had tenderly loved, just as I had really beheld them, a little before sunrise in the same summer, when that child died. I gazed upon the well-known scene, and I said aloud (as I thought) to myself, "It yet wants much of sunrise, and it is Easter Sunday; and that is the day on which they celebrate the first fruits of resurrection. I will walk abroad; old griefs shall be forgotten to-day; for the air is cool and still, and the hills are high and stretch away to heaven; and the forest glades are as quiet as the churchyard, and

with the dew I can wash the fever from my forehead, and then I shall be unhappy no longer." And I turned as if to open my garden gate, and immediately I saw upon the left a scene far different, but which yet the power of dreams had reconciled into harmony with the other. The scene was an Oriental one, and there also it was Easter Sunday, and very early in the morning. And at a vast distance were visible, as a stain upon the horizon, the domes and cupolas of a great city—an image or faint abstraction, caught perhaps in childhood from some picture of Jerusalem. And not a bow-shot from me, upon a stone and shaded by Judean palms, there sat a woman, and I looked, and it was—Ann! She fixed her eyes upon me earnestly, and I said to her at length: "So, then, I have found you at last." I waited, but she answered me not a word. Her face was the same as when I saw it last, and yet again how different! Seventeen years ago, when the lamplight fell upon her face, as for the last time I kissed her lips (lips, Ann, that to me were not polluted), her eyes were streaming with tears: the tears were now wiped away; she seemed more beautiful than she was at that time, but in all other points the same, and not older. Her looks were tranquil, but with unusual solemnity of expression, and I now gazed upon her with some awe; but suddenly her countenance grew dim, and turning to the mountains I perceived vapours rolling between us. In a moment all had vanished, thick darkness came on, and in the twinkling of an eye I was far away from mountains, and by lamplight in Oxford Street, walking again

with Ann—just as we walked seventeen years before, when we were both children.

As a final specimen, I cite one of a different character, from 1820.

The dream commenced with a music which now I often heard in dreams—a music of preparation and of awakening suspense, a music like the opening of the Coronation Anthem, and which, like *that*, gave the feeling of a vast march, of infinite cavalcades filing off, and the tread of innumerable armies. The morning was come of a mighty day—a day of crisis and of final hope for human nature, then suffering some mysterious eclipse, and labouring in some dread extremity. Somewhere, I knew not where—somehow, I knew not how—by some beings, I knew not whom—a battle, a strife, an agony, was conducting, was evolving like a great drama or piece of music, with which my sympathy was the more insupportable from my confusion as to its place, its cause, its nature, and its possible issue. I, as is usual in dreams (where of necessity we make ourselves central to every movement), had the power, and yet had not the power, to decide it. I had the power, if I could raise myself to will it, and yet again had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics was upon me, or the oppression of inexpiable guilt. "Deeper than ever plummet sounded," I lay inactive. Then like a chorus the passion deepened. Some greater interest was at stake, some mightier cause than ever yet the sword had pleaded, or trumpet had proclaimed. Then came sudden alarms, hurryings to and fro, trepidations of innumerable fugitives—I

knew not whether from the good cause or the bad, darkness and lights, tempest and human faces, and at last, with the sense that all was lost, female forms, and the features that were worth all the world to me, and but a moment allowed—and clasped hands, and heart-breaking partings, and then—everlasting farewells! And with a sigh, such as the caves of hell sighed when the incestuous mother uttered the abhorred name of death, the sound was reverberated —everlasting farewells! And again and yet again reverberated—everlasting farewells!

And I awoke in struggles, and cried aloud—"I will sleep no more."

But I am now called upon to wind up a narrative which has already extended to an unreasonable length. Within more spacious limits the materials which I have used might have been better unfolded, and much which I have not used might have been added with effect. Perhaps, however, enough has been given. It now remains that I should say something of the way in which this conflict of horrors was finally brought to a crisis. The reader is already aware (from a passage near the beginning of the introduction to the first part) that the Opium-eater has, in some way or other, "unwound almost to its final links the accursed chain which bound him." By what means? To have narrated this according to the original intention would have far exceeded the space which can now be allowed. It is fortunate, as such a cogent reason exists for abridging it, that I should, on a maturer view of the case, have been exceedingly unwilling to injure, by

any such unaffecting details, the impression of the history itself, as an appeal to the prudence and the conscience of the yet unconfirmed opium-eater—or even (though a very inferior consideration) to injure its effect as a composition. The interest of the judicious reader will not attach itself chiefly to the subject of the fascinating spells, but to the fascinating power. Not the Opium-eater, but the opium, is the true hero of the tale, and the legitimate centre on which the interest revolves. The object was to display the marvellous agency of opium, whether for pleasure or for pain: if that is done, the action of the piece has closed.

However, as some people, in spite of all laws to the contrary, will persist in asking what became of the Opium-eater, and in what state he now is, I answer for him thus: The reader is aware that opium had long ceased to found its empire on spells of pleasure; it was solely by the tortures connected with the attempt to abjure it that it kept its hold. Yet, as other tortures, no less it may be thought, attended the non-abjuration of such a tyrant, a choice only of evils was left; and *that* might as well have been adopted which, however terrific in itself, held out a prospect of final restoration to happiness. This appears true; but good logic gave the author no strength to act upon it. However, a crisis arrived for the author's life, and a crisis for other objects still dearer to him—and which will always be far dearer to him than his life, even now that it is again a happy one. I saw that I must die if I continued the opium. I determined, therefore, if that should be

required, to die in throwing it off. How much I was at that time taking I cannot say, for the opium which I used had been purchased for me by a friend, who afterwards refused to let me pay him; so that I could not ascertain even what quantity I had used within the year. I apprehend, however, that I took it very irregularly, and that I varied from about fifty or sixty grains to 150 a day. My first task was to reduce it to forty, to thirty, and as fast as I could to twelve grains.

I triumphed. But think not, reader, that therefore my sufferings were ended, nor think of me as of one sitting in a *dejected* state. Think of me as one, even when four months had passed, still agitated, writhing, throbbing, palpitating, shattered, and much perhaps in the situation of him who has been racked, as I collect the torments of that state from the affecting account of them left by a most innocent sufferer * of the times of James I. Meantime, I derived no benefit from any medicine, except one prescribed to me by an Edinburgh surgeon of great eminence, viz., ammoniated tincture of valerian. Medical account, therefore, of my emancipation I have not much to give, and even that little, as managed by a man so ignorant of medicine as myself, would probably tend only to mislead. At all events, it would be mispiaced in this situation. The moral of the narrative is addressed to the opium-eater, and therefore of necessity limited in its application. If he is taught to fear and tremble, enough has been effected. But he

* William Lithgow. His book (Travels, &c.) is ill and pedantically written; but the account of his own sufferings on the rack at Malaga is overpoweringly affecting.

may say that the issue of my case is at least a proof that opium, after a seventeen years' use and an eight years' abuse of its powers, may still be renounced, and that *he* may chance to bring to the task greater energy than I did, or that with a stronger constitution than mine he may obtain the same results with less. This may be true. I would not presume to measure the efforts of other men by my own. I heartily wish him more energy. I wish him the same success. Nevertheless, I had motives external to myself which he may unfortunately want, and these supplied me with conscientious supports which mere personal interests might fail to supply to a mind debilitated by opium.

Jeremy Taylor conjectures that it may be as painful to be born as to die. I think it probable; and during the whole period of diminishing the opium I had the torments of a man passing out of one mode of existence into another. The issue was not death, but a sort of physical regeneration; and I may add that ever since, at intervals, I have had a restoration of more than youthful spirits, though under the pressure of difficulties which in a less happy state of mind I should have called misfortunes.

One memorial of my former condition still remains—my dreams are not yet perfectly calm; the dread swell and agitation of the storm have not wholly subsided; the legions that encamped in them are drawing off, but not all departed; my sleep is still tumultuous, and, like the gates of Paradise to our first parents when looking back from afar, it is still (in the tremendous line of Milton)

With dreadful faces throng'd, and fiery arms

CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER.

APPENDIX.

From the "London Magazine" for December 1822.

THE interest excited by the two papers bearing this title, in our numbers for September and October 1821, will have kept our promise of a Third Part fresh in the remembrance of our readers. That we are still unable to fulfil our engagement in its original meaning will, we are sure, be matter of regret to them as to ourselves, especially when they have perused the following affecting narrative. It was composed for the purpose of being appended to an edition of the Confessions in a separate volume, which is already before the public, and we have reprinted it entire, that our subscribers may be in possession of the whole of this extraordinary history.

The proprietors of this little work having determined on reprinting it, some explanation seems called for, to account for the non-appearance of a third part promised in the *London Magazine* of De-

cember last; and the more so because the proprietors, under whose guarantee that promise was issued, might otherwise be implicated in the blame—little or much—attached to its non-fulfilment. This blame, in mere justice, the author takes wholly upon himself. What may be the exact amount of the guilt which he thus appropriates is a very dark question to his own judgment, and not much illuminated by any of the masters in casuistry whom he has consulted on the occasion. On the one hand it seems generally agreed that a promise is binding in the inverse ratio of the numbers to whom it is made; for which reason it is that we see many persons break promises without scruple that are made to a whole nation, who keep their faith religiously in all private engagements, breaches of promise towards the stronger party being committed at a man's own peril; on the other hand, the only parties interested in the promises of an author are his readers, and these it is a point of modesty in any author to believe as few as possible—or perhaps only one, in which case any promise imposes a sanctity of moral obligation which it is shocking to think of. Casuistry dismissed, however, the author throws himself on the indulgent consideration of all who may conceive themselves aggrieved by his delay, in the following account of his own condition from the end of last year, when the engagement was made, up nearly to the present time. For any purpose of self-excuse it might be sufficient to say that intolerable bodily suffering had totally disabled him for almost any exertion of mind, more especially for such as demands

and presupposes a pleasurable and genial state of feeling ; but, as a case that may by possibility contribute a trifle to the medical history of opium, in a further stage of its action than can often have been brought under the notice of professional men, he has judged that it might be acceptable to some readers to have it described more at length. *Fiat experimentum in corpore vili* is a just rule where there is any reasonable presumption of benefit to arise on a large scale. What the benefit may be will admit of a doubt, but there can be none as to the value of the body ; for a more worthless body than his own the author is free to confess cannot be. It is his pride to believe that it is the very ideal of a base, crazy, despicable human system, that hardly ever could have been meant to be seaworthy for two days under the ordinary storms and wear and tear of life ; and indeed, if that were the creditable way of disposing of human bodies, he must own that he should almost be ashamed to bequeath his wretched structure to any respectable dog. But now to the case, which, for the sake of avoiding the constant recurrence of a cumbersome periphrasis, the author will take the liberty of giving in the first person.

Those who have read the Confessions will have closed them with the impression that I had wholly renounced the use of opium. This impression I meant to convey, and that for two reasons : first, because the very act of deliberately recording such a state of suffering necessarily presumes in the recorder a power of surveying his own case as a cool

spectator, and a degree of spirits for adequately describing it which it would be inconsistent to suppose in any person speaking from the station of an actual sufferer; secondly, because I, who had descended from so large a quantity as 8,000 drops to so small a one (comparatively speaking) as a quantity ranging between 300 and 160 drops, might well suppose that the victory was in effect achieved. In suffering my readers, therefore, to think of me as of a reformed opium-eater, I left no impression but what I shared myself; and, as may be seen, even this impression was left to be collected from the general tone of the conclusion, and not from any specific words, which are in no instance at variance with the literal truth. In no long time after that paper was written I became sensible that the effort which remained would cost me far more energy than I had anticipated, and the necessity for making it was more apparent every month. In particular I became aware of an increasing callousness or defect of sensibility in the stomach, and this I imagined might imply a scirrhous state of that organ, either formed or forming. An eminent physician, to whose kindness I was at that time deeply indebted, informed me that such a termination of my case was not impossible, though likely to be forestalled by a different termination in the event of my continuing the use of opium. Opium therefore I resolved wholly to abjure as soon as I should find myself at liberty to bend my undivided attention and energy to this purpose. It was not, however, until the 24th of June last that any tolerable concurrence of facilities for such an attempt

arrived. On that day I began my experiment, having previously settled in my own mind that I would not flinch, but would "stand up to the scratch" under any possible "punishment." I must premise that about 170 or 180 drops had been my ordinary allowance for many months; occasionally I had run up as high as 500, and once nearly to 700; in repeated preludes to my final experiment I had also gone as low as 100 drops; but had found it impossible to stand it beyond the fourth day—which, by the way, I have always found more difficult to get over than any of the preceding three. I went off under easy sail —130 drops a day for three days; on the fourth I plunged at once to 80. The misery which I now suffered "took the conceit" out of me at once, and for about a month I continued off and on about this mark; then I sunk to 60, and the next day to—none at all. This was the first day for nearly ten years that I had existed without opium. I persevered in my abstinence for ninety hours; *i.e.*, upwards of half a week. Then I took—ask me not how much; say, ye severest, what would ye have done? Then I abstained again—then took about 25 drops; then abstained; and so on.

Meantime the symptoms which attended my case for the first six weeks of my experiment were these; enormous irritability and excitement of the whole system; the stomach in particular restored to a full feeling of vitality and sensibility, but often in great pain; unceasing restlessness night and day; sleep—I scarcely knew what it was; three hours out of the twenty-four was the utmost I had, and that so

agitated and shallow that I heard every sound that was near me. Lower jaw constantly swelling, mouth ulcerated, and many other distressing symptoms that would be tedious to repeat ; amongst which, however, I must mention one, because it had never failed to accompany any attempt to renounce opium—viz., violent sternutation. This now became exceedingly troublesome, sometimes lasting for two hours at once, and recurring at least twice or three times a day. I was not much surprised at this on recollecting what I had somewhere heard or read, that the membrane which lines the nostrils is a prolongation of that which lines the stomach ; whence, I believe, are explained the inflammatory appearances about the nostrils of dram drinkers. The sudden restoration of its original sensibility to the stomach expressed itself, I suppose, in this way. It is remarkable also that during the whole period of years through which I had taken opium I had never once caught cold (as the phrase is), nor even the slightest cough. But now a violent cold attacked me, and a cough soon after. In an unfinished fragment of a letter begun about this time to —— I find these words : "You ask me to write the —— Do you know Beaumont and Fletcher's play of "Thierry and Theodore"? There you will see my case as to sleep ; nor is it much of an exaggeration in other features. I protest to you that I have a greater influx of thoughts in one hour at present than in a whole year under the reign of opium. It seems as though all the thoughts which had been frozen up for a decade of years by opium, had now, according to the old fable, been thawed at once—

such a multitude stream in upon me from all quarters. Yet such is my impatience and hideous irritability that for one which I detain and write down fifty escape me: in spite of my weariness from suffering and want of sleep, I cannot stand still or sit for two minutes together. 'I nunc, et versus tecum meditare canoros.'"

At this stage of my experiment I sent to a neighbouring surgeon, requesting that he would come over to see me. In the evening he came; and after briefly stating the case to him, I asked this question; Whether he did not think that the opium might have acted as a stimulus to the digestive organs, and that the present state of suffering in the stomach, which manifestly was the cause of the inability to sleep, might arise from indigestion? His answer was: No; on the contrary, he thought that the suffering was caused by digestion itself, which should naturally go on below the consciousness, but which from the unnatural state of the stomach, vitiated by so long a use of opium, was become distinctly perceptible. This opinion was plausible; and the unintermitting nature of the suffering disposes me to think that it was true, for if it had been any mere *irregular* affection of the stomach, it should naturally have intermitted occasionally, and constantly fluctuated as to degree. The intention of nature, as manifested in the healthy state, obviously is to withdraw from our notice all the vital motions, such as the circulation of the blood, the expansion and contraction of the lungs, the peristaltic action of the stomach, &c., and opium, it seems, is able in this, as in other instances, to counteract her purposes. By the advice

of the surgeon I tried *bitters*. For a short time these greatly mitigated the feelings under which I laboured, but about the forty-second day of the experiment the symptoms already noticed began to retire, and new ones to arise of a different and far more tormenting class ; under these, but with a few intervals of remission, I have since continued to suffer. But I dismiss them undescribed for two reasons : first, because the mind revolts from retracing circumstantially any sufferings from which it is removed by too short or by no interval. To do this with minuteness enough to make the review of any use would be indeed *infandum renovare dolorem*, and possibly without a sufficient motive ; for secondly, I doubt whether this latter state be anyway referable to opium—positively considered, or even negatively ; that is, whether it is to be numbered amongst the last evils from the direct action of opium, or even amongst the earliest evils consequent upon a *want* of opium in a system long deranged by its use. Certainly one part of the symptoms might be accounted for from the time of year (August), for though the summer was not a hot one, yet in any case the sum of all the heat *funded* (if one may say so) during the previous months, added to the existing heat of that month, naturally renders August in its better half the hottest part of the year ; and it so happened that the excessive perspiration which even at Christmas attends any great reduction in the daily quantum of opium—and which in July was so violent as to oblige me to use a bath five or six times a day—had about the setting-in of the hottest season

wholly retired, on which account any bad effect of the heat might be the more unmitigated. Another symptom—viz., what in my ignorance I call internal rheumatism (sometimes affecting the shoulders, &c., but more often appearing to be seated in the stomach)—seemed again less probably attributable to the opium, or the want of opium, than to the dampness of the house * which I inhabit, which had about this time attained its maximum, July having been, as usual, a month of incessant rain in our most rainy part of England.

Under these reasons for doubting whether opium had any connexion with the latter stage of my bodily wretchedness—except, indeed, as an occasional cause, as having left the body weaker and more crazy, and thus predisposed to any mal-influence whatever—I willingly spare my reader all description of it; let it perish to him, and would that I could as easily say let it perish to my own remembrances, that any future hours of tranquillity may not be disturbed by too vivid an ideal of possible human misery!

So much for the sequel of my experiment. As to the former stage, in which probably lies the experiment and its application to other cases, I must

* In saying this I mean no disrespect to the individual house, as the reader will understand when I tell him that, with the exception of one or two princely mansions, and some few inferior ones that have been coated with Roman cement, I am not acquainted with any house in this mountainous district which is wholly waterproof. The architecture of books, I flatter myself, is conducted on just principles in this country; but for any other architecture, it is in a barbarous state, and what is worse, in a retrograde state.

request my reader not to forget the reasons for which I have recorded it. These were two: First, a belief that I might add some trifle to the history of opium as a medical agent. In this I am aware that I have not at all fulfilled my own intentions, in consequence of the torpor of mind, pain of body, and extreme disgust to the subject which besieged me whilst writing that part of my paper; which part being immediately sent off to the press (distant about five degrees of latitude), cannot be corrected or improved. But from this account, rambling as it may be, it is evident that thus much of benefit may arise to the persons most interested in such a history of opium, viz., to opium-eaters in general, that it establishes, for their consolation and encouragement, the fact that opium may be renounced, and without greater sufferings than an ordinary resolution may support, and by a pretty rapid course * of descent.

* On which last notice I would remark that mine was *too* rapid, and the suffering therefore needlessly aggravated; or rather, perhaps, it was not sufficiently continuous and equably graduated. But that the reader may judge for himself, and above all that the Opium-eater, who is preparing to retire from business, may have every sort of information before him, I subjoin my diary :—

First Week.	Drops of Laud.	*Second Week.*	Drops of Laud.
Mond. June 24	130	Mond. July 1	80
„ 25	140	„ 2	80
„ 26	130	„ 3	90
„ 27	80	„ 4	100
„ 28	80	„ 5	80
„ 29	80	„ 6	80
„ 30	80	„ 7	80

To communicate this result of my experiment was my foremost purpose. Secondly, as a purpose collateral to this, I wished to explain how it had become impossible for me to compose a Third Part in time to accompany this republication; for during the very time of this experiment the proof-sheets of this reprint were sent to me from London, and such was

Third Week.	Drops of Laud.	*Fourth Week.*	Drops of Laud.
Mond. July 8	300	Mond. July 15	76
„ 9	50	„ 16	73½
„ 10	Hiatus in MS.	„ 17	73½
„ 11		„ 18	70
„ 12		„ 19	240
„ 13		„ 20	80
„ 14	76	„ 21	350

Fifth Week.

	Drops of Laud.
Mond. July 22	60
„ 23	none.
„ 24	none.
„ 25	none.
„ 26	200
„ 27	none.

What mean these abrupt relapses, the reader will ask perhaps, to such numbers as 300, 350, &c.? The *impulse* to these relapses was mere infirmity of purpose; the *motive*, where any motive blended with this impulse, was either the principle of "*reculer pour mieux sauter;*" (for under the torpor of a large dose, which lasted for a day or two, a less quantity satisfied the stomach, which on awakening found itself partly accustomed to this new ration); or else it was this principle—that of sufferings otherwise equal, those will be borne best which meet with a mood of anger. Now, whenever I ascended to my large dose I was furiously incensed on the following day, and could then have borne anything.

my inability to expand or to improve them, that I could not even bear to read them over with attention enough to notice the press errors or to correct any verbal inaccuracies. These were my reasons for troubling my reader with any record, long or short, of experiments relating to so truly base a subject as my own body; and I am earnest with the reader that he will not forget them, or so far misapprehend me as to believe it possible that I would condescend to so rascally a subject for its own sake, or indeed for any less object than that of general benefit to others. Such an animal as the self-observing valetudinarian I know there is; I have met him myself occasionally, and I know that he is the worst imaginable *heautontimoroumenos;* aggravating and sustaining, by calling into distinct consciousness, every symptom that would else perhaps, under a different direction given to the thoughts, become evanescent. But as to myself, so profound is my contempt for this undignified and selfish habit, that I could as little condescend to it as I could to spend my time in watching a poor servant girl, to whom at this moment I hear some lad or other making love at the back of my house. Is it for a Transcendental Philosopher to feel any curiosity on such an occasion? Or can I, whose life is worth only eight and a half years' purchase, be supposed to have leisure for such trivial employments? However, to put this out of question, I shall say one thing, which will perhaps shock some readers, but I am sure it ought not to do so, considering the motives on which I say it. No man, I suppose, employs much of his time on the pheno-

mena of his own body without some regard for it; whereas the reader sees that, so far from looking upon mine with any complacency or regard, I hate it, and make it the object of my bitter ridicule and contempt; and I should not be displeased to know that the last indignities which the law inflicts upon the bodies of the worst malefactors might hereafter fall upon it. And, in testification of my sincerity in saying this, I shall make the following offer. Like other men, I have particular fancies about the place of my burial; having lived chiefly in a mountainous region, I rather cleave to the conceit, that a grave in a green churchyard amongst the ancient and solitary hills will be a sublimer and more tranquil place of repose for a philosopher than any in the hideous Golgothas of London. Yet if the gentlemen of Surgeons' Hall think that any benefit can redound to their science from inspecting the appearances in the body of an opium-eater, let them speak but a word, and I will take care that mine shall be legally secured to them—*i.e.*, as soon as I have done with it myself. Let them not hesitate to express their wishes upon any scruples of false delicacy and consideration for my feelings; I assure them they will do me too much honour by "demonstrating" on such a crazy body as mine, and it will give me pleasure to anticipate this posthumous revenge and insult inflicted upon that which has caused me so much suffering in this life. Such bequests are not common; reversionary benefits contingent upon the death of the testator are indeed dangerous to announce in many cases: of this we have a remark-

able instance in the habits of a Roman prince, who used, upon any notification made to him by rich persons that they had left him a handsome estate in their wills, to express his entire satisfaction at such arrangements and his gracious acceptance of those loyal legacies ; but then, if the testators neglected to give him immediate possession of the property, if they traitorously "persisted in living" (*si vivere perseverarent*, as Suetonius expresses it), he was highly provoked, and took his measures accordingly. In those times, and from one of the worst of the Cæsars, we might expect such conduct ; but I am sure that from English surgeons at this day I need look for no expressions of impatience, or of any other feelings but such as are answerable to that pure love of science and all its interests which induces me to make such an offer.

Sept. 30, 1822.

SHAKESPEARE.

SHAKSPEARE.

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE, the prôtagonist on the great arena of modern poetry, and the glory of the human intellect, was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick, in the year 1564, and upon some day, not precisely ascertained, in the month of April. It is certain that he was baptized on the 25th; and from that fact, combined with some shadow of a tradition, Malone has inferred that he was born on the 23rd. There is doubtless, on the one hand, no absolute necessity deducible from law or custom, as either operated in those times, which obliges us to adopt such a conclusion; for children might be baptized, and were baptized, at various distances from their birth; yet, on the other hand, the 23rd is as likely to have been the day as any other, and more likely than any earlier day, upon two arguments. First, because there was probably a tradition floating in the seventeenth century, that Shakspeare died upon his birthday: now it is beyond a doubt that he died upon the 23rd of April. Secondly, because it is a reasonable presumption, that no parents, living in a simple

community, tenderly alive to the pieties of household duty, and in an age still clinging reverentially to the ceremonial ordinances of religion, would much delay the adoption of their child into the great family of Christ. Considering the extreme frailty of an infant's life during its two earliest years, to delay would often be to disinherit the child of its Christian privileges; privileges not the less eloquent to the feelings from being profoundly mysterious, and in the English Church forced not only upon the attention, but even upon the eye of the most thoughtless. According to the discipline of the English Church, the unbaptized are buried with "maimed rights," 'shorn of their obsequies, and sternly denied that 'sweet and solemn farewell" by which otherwise the Church expresses her final charity with all men; and not only so, but they are even *locally* separated and sequestrated. Ground the most hallowed, and populous with Christian burials of households,

> That died in peace with one another,
> Father, sister, son, and brother.

opens to receive the vilest malefactor; by which the Church symbolically expresses her maternal willingness to gather back into her fold those even of her flock who have strayed from her by the most memorable aberrations; and yet, with all this indulgence, she banishes to unhallowed ground the innocent bodies of the unbaptized. To them and to suicides she turns a face of wrath. With this gloomy fact offered to the very external senses, it is difficult to suppose that any parents would risk their own re-

proaches by putting the fulfilment of so grave a duty on the hazard of a convulsion fit. The case of royal children is different; their baptisms, it is true, were often delayed for weeks; but the household chaplains of the palace were always at hand, night and day, to baptize them in the very agonies of death. We must presume, therefore, that William Shakspeare was born on some day very little anterior to that of his baptism; and the more so because the season of the year was lovely and genial, the 23rd of April in 1564 corresponding in fact with what we now call the 3rd of May, so that, whether the child was to be carried abroad, or the clergyman to be summoned, no hindrance would arise from the weather. One only argument has sometimes struck us for supposing that the 22nd might be the day, and not the 23rd; which is, that Shakspeare's sole grand-daughter, Lady Barnard, was married on the 22nd of April 1626, ten years exactly from the poet's death, and the reason for choosing this day *might* have had a reference to her illustrious grandfather's birthday, which there is good reason for thinking would be celebrated as a festival in the family for generations. Still this choice *may* have been an accident, or governed merely by reason of convenience. And, on the whole, it is as well perhaps to acquiesce in the old belief, that Shakspeare was born and died on the 23rd of April. We cannot do wrong if we drink to his memory on both 22nd and 23rd.

On a first review of the circumstances, we have reason to feel no little perplexity in finding the materials for a Life of this transcendent writer so

meagre and so few, and amongst them the larger part of doubtful authority. All the energy of curiosity directed upon this subject, through a period of one hundred and fifty years (for so long it is since Betterton the actor began to make researches) has availed us little or nothing. Neither the local traditions of his provincial birthplace, though sharing with London through half a century the honour of his familiar presence, nor the recollections of that brilliant literary circle with whom he lived in the metropolis, have yielded much more than such an outline of his history as is oftentimes to be gathered from the penurious records of a gravestone. That he lived, and that he died, and that he was "a little lower than the angels"—these make up pretty nearly the amount of our undisputed report. It may be doubted indeed whether at this day we are as accurately acquainted with the life of Shakspeare as with that of Chaucer, though divided from each other by an interval of two centuries, and (what should have been more effectual towards oblivion) by the wars of the Two Roses. And yet the traditional memory of a rural and a sylvan region, such as Warwickshire at that time was, is usually exact as well as tenacious; and, with respect to Shakspeare in particular, we may presume it to have been full and circumstantial through the generation succeeding to his own, not only from the curiosity, and perhaps something of a scandalous interest, which would pursue the motions of one living so large a part of his life at a distance from his wife, but also from the final reverence and honour which would settle upon the memory of a poet so

pre-eminently successful ; of one who, in a space of five-and-twenty years, after running a bright career in the capital city of his native land, and challenging notice from the throne, had retired with an ample fortune created by his personal efforts and by labours purely intellectual.

How are we to account then for that deluge, as if from Lethe, which has swept away so entirely the traditional memorials of one so illustrious ? Such is the fatality of error which overclouds every question connected with Shakspeare, that two of his principal critics, Steevens and Malone, have endeavoured to solve the difficulty by cutting it with a falsehood. They deny in effect that he *was* illustrious in the century succeeding to his own, however much he has since become so. We shall first produce their statements in their own words, and we shall then briefly review them.

Steevens delivers *his* opinion in the following terms :—"How little Shakspeare was once read may be understood from Tate, who, in his dedication to the altered play of "King Lear," speaks of the original as an obscure piece, recommended to his notice by a friend ; and the author of the "Tatler," having occasion to quote a few lines out of "Macbeth," was content to receive them from Davenant's alteration of that celebrated drama, in which almost every original beauty is either awkwardly disguised or arbitrarily omitted." Another critic, who cites this passage from Steevens, pursues the hypothesis as follows : —"In fifty years after his death Dryden mentions that he was then become *a little obsolete.* In the begin-

ning of the last century Lord Shaftesbury complains of his *rude unpolished style and his antiquated phrase and wit.* It is certain that for nearly a hundred years after his death, partly owing to the immediate revolution and rebellion, and partly to the licentious taste encouraged in Charles II.'s time, and perhaps partly to the incorrect state of his works, he was ALMOST ENTIRELY NEGLECTED." This critic then goes on to quote with approbation the opinion of Malone—that "if he had been read, admired, studied, and imitated in the same degree as he is now, the enthusiasm of some one or other of his admirers in the last age would have induced him to make some inquiries concerning the history of his theatrical career, and the anecdotes of his private life." After which this enlightened writer re-affirms and clenches the judgment he has quoted by saying: "His admirers, however, *if he had admirers in that age,* possessed no portion of such enthusiasm.

It may perhaps be an instructive lesson to young readers if we now show them, by a short sifting of these confident dogmatists, how easy it is for a careless or a half-read man to circulate the most absolute falsehoods under the semblance of truth; falsehoods which impose upon himself as much as they do upon others. We believe that not one word or illustration is uttered in the sentence cited from these three critics which is not *virtually* in the very teeth of the truth.

To begin with Mr. Nahum Tate. This poor grub of literature, if he did really speak of "Lear" as "an *obscure* piece, recommended to his notice by a friend,"

of which we must be allowed to doubt, was then uttering a conscious falsehood. It happens that "Lear" was one of the few Shakspearian dramas which had kept the stage unaltered. But it is easy to see a mercenary motive in such an artifice as this. Mr. Nahum Tate is not of a class of whom it can be safe to say that they are "well known;" they and their desperate tricks are essentially obscure, and good reason he has to exult in the felicity of such obscurity, for else this same vilest of travesties, Mr. Nahum's "Lear," would consecrate his name to everlasting scorn. For himself, he belonged to the age of Dryden rather than of Pope; he "flourished," if we can use such a phrase of one who was always withering, about the era of the Revolution; and his "Lear," we believe, was arranged in the year 1682. But the family to which he belongs is abundantly recorded in the "Dunciad"; and his own name will be found amongst its catalogues of heroes.

With respect to *the author of the "Tatler,"* a very different explanation is requisite. Steevens means the reader to understand Addison; but it does not follow that the particular paper in question was from his pen. Nothing, however, could be more natural than to quote from the common form of the play as then in possession of the stage. It was *there*, beyond a doubt, that a fine gentleman living upon town, and not professing any deep scholastic knowledge of literature (a light in which we are always to regard the writers of the "Spectator," "Guardian," &c.), would be likely to have learned anything he quoted from "Macbeth." This we say gene-

rally of the writers in those periodical papers ; but with reference to Addison in particular, it is time to correct the popular notion of his literary character, or at least to mark it by severer lines of distinction. It is already pretty well known that Addison had no very intimate acquaintance with the literature of his own country. It is known also that he did not think such an acquaintance any ways essential to the character of an elegant scholar and *littérateur*. Quite enough he found it, and more than enough for the time he had to spare, if he could maintain a tolerable familiarity with the foremost Latin poets, and a very slender one indeed with the Grecian. *How* slender we can see in his "Travels." Of modern authors none as yet had been published with notes, commentaries, or critical collations of the text ; and accordingly Addison looked upon all of them, except those few who professed themselves followers in the retinue and equipage of the ancients, as creatures of a lower race. Boileau, as a mere imitator and propagator of Horace, he read, and probably little else, amongst the French classics. Hence it arose that he took upon himself to speak sneeringly of Tasso. To this, which was a bold act for his timid mind, he was emboldened by the countenance of Boileau. Of the elder Italian authors, such as Ariosto, and *à fortiori* Dante, he knew absolutely nothing. Passing to our own literature, it is certain that Addison was profoundly ignorant of Chaucer and of Spenser. Milton only—and why ? simply because he was a brilliant scholar, and stands like a bridge

between the Christian literature and the Pagan—Addison had read and esteemed. There was also in the very constitution of Milton's mind, in the majestic regularity and planetary solemnity of its *epic* movements, something which he could understand and appreciate: as to the meteoric and incalculable eccentricities of the *dramatic* mind, as it displayed itself in the heroic age of our drama, amongst the Titans of 1590–1630, they confounded and overwhelmed him.

In particular, with regard to Shakspeare, we shall now proclaim a discovery which we made some twenty years ago. We, like others, from seeing frequent references to Shakspeare in the "Spectator," had acquiesced in the common belief that, although Addison was no doubt profoundly unlearned in Shakspeare's language, and thoroughly unable to do him justice (and this we might well assume, since his great rival Pope, who had expressly studied Shakspeare, was, after all, so memorably deficient in the appropriate knowledge), yet that of course he had a vague popular knowledge of the mighty poet's cardinal dramas. Accident only led us into a discovery of our mistake. Twice or thrice we had observed that, if Shakspeare were quoted, that paper turned out not to be Addison's; and at length, by express examination, we ascertained the curious fact that Addison has never in one instance quoted or made any reference to Shakspeare. But was this, as Steevens most disingenuously pretends, to be taken as an exponent of the public feeling towards Shakspeare? Was Addison's neglect representative

of a general neglect? If so, whence came Rowe's edition, Pope's, Theobald's, Sir Thomas Hanmer's, Bishop Warburton's, all upon the heels of one another? With such facts staring him in the face, how shameless must be that critic who could, in support of such a thesis, refer to "*the author of the 'Tatler,'*" contemporary with all these editors. The truth is, Addison was well aware of Shakspeare's hold on the popular mind; too well aware of it. The feeble constitution of the poetic faculty, as existing in himself, forbade his sympathising with Shakspeare; the proportions were too colossal for his delicate vision; and yet, as one who sought popularity himself, he durst not shock what perhaps he viewed as a national prejudice. Those who have happened, like ourselves, to see the effect of passionate music and "deep-inwoven harmonics" upon the feeling of an idiot, may conceive what we mean. Such music does not utterly revolt the idiot; on the contrary, it has a strange but horrid fascination for him: it alarms, irritates, disturbs, makes him profoundly unhappy; and chiefly by unlocking imperfect glimpses of thoughts and slumbering instincts, which it is for his peace to have entirely obscured, because for him they can be revealed only partially, and with the sad effect of throwing a baleful gleam upon his blighted condition. Do we mean, then, to compare Addison with an idiot? Not generally, by any means. Nobody can more sincerely admire him where he was a man of real genius—viz., in his delineations of character and manners, or in the exquisite delicacies of his humour. But assuredly

Addison as a poet was amongst the sons of the feeble, and between the authors of "Cato" and "King Lear" there was a gulf never to be bridged over.

But Dryden, we are told, pronounced Shakspeare already in *his* day "*a little obsolete.*" Here, now, we have wilful, deliberate falsehood. *Obsolete*, in Dryden's meaning, does not imply that he was so with regard to his popularity (the question then at issue), but with regard to his diction and choice of words. To cite Dryden as a witness for any purpose against Shakspeare—Dryden, who of all men had the most ransacked wit and exhausted language in celebrating the supremacy of Shakspeare's genius—does indeed require as much shamelessness in feeling as mendacity in principle.

But then Lord Shaftesbury, who may be taken as half-way between Dryden and Pope (Dryden died in 1700, Pope was then twelve years old, and Lord S. wrote chiefly, we believe, between 1700 and 1710), "complains," it seems, "of his rude unpolished style, and his antiquated phrase and wit." What if he does? Let the whole truth be told, and then we shall see how much stress is to be laid upon such a judgment. The second Lord Shaftesbury, the author of the "Characteristics," was the grandson of that famous political agitator, the Chancellor Shaftesbury, who passed his whole life in storms of his own creation. The second Lord Shaftesbury was a man of crazy constitution, querulous from ill-health, and had received an eccentric education from his eccentric grandfather. He was practised daily in *talking* Latin, to which afterwards he added a competent

study of the Greek; and finally he became unusually learned for his rank, but the most absolute and undistinguishing pedant that perhaps literature has to show. He sneers continually at the regular-built academic pedant; but he himself, though no academic, was essentially the very impersonation of pedantry. No thought however beautiful, no image however magnificent, could conciliate his praise as long as it was clothed in English; but present him with the most trivial commonplaces in Greek, and he unaffectedly fancied them divine; mistaking the pleasurable sense of his own power in a difficult and rare accomplishment for some peculiar force or beauty in the passage. Such was the outline of his literary taste. And was it upon Shakspeare only, or upon him chiefly, that he lavished his pedantry? Far from it. He attacked Milton with no less fervour; he attacked Dryden with a thousand times more. Jeremy Taylor he quoted only to ridicule; and even Locke, the confidential friend of his grandfather, he never alludes to without a sneer. As to Shakspeare, so far from Lord Shaftesbury's censures arguing his deficient reputation, the very fact of his noticing him at all proves his enormous popularity; for upon system he noticed those only who ruled the public taste. The insipidity of his objections to Shakspeare may be judged from this, that he comments in a spirit of absolute puerility upon the name *Desdemona*, as though intentionally formed from the Greek word for *superstition*. In fact, he had evidently read little beyond the list of names in Shakspeare; yet there is proof enough that the irresistible beauty of what little he

had read was too much for all his pedantry, and startled him exceedingly; for ever afterwards he speaks of Shakspeare as one who, with a little aid from Grecian sources, really had something great and promising about him. As to modern authors, neither this Lord Shaftesbury nor Addison read anything for the latter years of their life but Bayle's Dictionary. And most of the little scintillations of erudition which may be found in the notes to the "Characteristics," and in the Essays of Addison, are derived, almost without exception, and uniformly without acknowledgment, from Bayle.

Finally, with regard to the sweeping assertion, that "for nearly a hundred years after his death Shakspeare was almost entirely neglected," we shall meet this scandalous falsehood by a rapid view of his fortunes during the century in question. The tradition has always been, that Shakspeare was honoured by the especial notice of Queen Elizabeth, as well as by that of James I. At one time we were disposed to question the truth of this tradition; but that was for want of having read attentively the lines of Ben Jonson to the memory of Shakspeare, those generous lines which have so absurdly been taxed with faint praise. Jonson could make no mistake on this point: he, as one of Shakspeare's familiar companions, must have witnessed at the very time, and accompanied with friendly sympathy, every motion of royal favour towards Shakspeare. Now he, in words which leave no room for doubt, exclaims—

> Sweet swan of Avon! what a sight it were
> To see thee in our waters yet appear,
> And make those flights upon the banks of Thames
> *That so did take Eliza and our James.*

These princes, then, *were* taken, were fascinated, with some of Shakspeare's dramas. In Elizabeth the approbation would probably be sincere. In James we can readily suppose it to have been assumed, for he was a pedant in a different sense from Lord Shaftesbury; not from undervaluing modern poetry, but from caring little or nothing for any poetry, although he wrote about its mechanic rules. Still, the royal *imprimatur* would be influential and serviceable no less when offered hypocritically than in full sincerity. Next let us consider, at the very moment of Shakspeaee's death, who were the leaders of the British youth, the *principes juventutis*, in the two fields, equally important to a great poet's fame, of rank and of genius? The Prince of Wales and John Milton; the first being then about sixteen years old, the other about eight. Now these two great powers, as we may call them, these presiding stars over all that was Euglish in thought and action, were both impassioned admirers of Shakspeare. Each of them counts for many thousands. The Prince of Wales had learned to appreciate Shakspeare, not originally from reading him, but from witnessing the Court representations of his plays at Whitehall. Afterwards we know that he made Shakspeare his closet companion, for he was reproached with doing so by Milton. And we know also, from the just criticism pronounced

upon the character and diction of Caliban by one of Charles's confidential counsellors, Lord Falkland, that the king's admiration of Shakspeare had impressed a determination upon the Court reading. As to Milton, by double prejudices, puritanical and classical, his mind had been preoccupied against the full impressions of Shakspeare. And we know that there is such a thing as keeping the sympathies of love and admiration in a dormant state, or state of abeyance; an effort of self-conquest realised in more cases than one by the ancient fathers, both Greek and Latin, with regard to the profane classics. Intellectually they admired, and would not belie their admiration; but they did not give their hearts cordially, they did not abandon themselves to their natural impulses. They averted their eyes and weaned their attention from the dazzling object. Such, probably, was Milton's state of feeling towards Shakspeare after 1642, when the theatres were suppressed, and the fanatical fervour in its noontide heat. Yet even then he did not belie his reverence intellectually for Shakspeare; and in his younger days we know that he had spoken more enthusiastically of Shakspeare than he ever did again of any uninspired author. Not only did he address a sonnet to his memory, in which he declares that kings would wish to die, if by dying they could obtain such a monument in the hearts of men; but he also speaks of him in his *Il Penseroso* as the tutelary genius of the English stage. In this transmission of the torch (λαμπαδοφορια) Dryden succeeds to Milton: he was born nearly thirty years later;

about thirty years they were contemporaries, and by thirty years, or nearly, Dryden survived his great leader. Dryden, in fact, lived out the seventeenth century. And we have now arrived within nine years of the era when the critical editions started in hot succession to one another. The names we have mentioned were the great influential names of the century. But of inferior homage there was no end. How came Betterton the actor, how came Davenant, how came Rowe, or Pope, by their intense (if not always sound) admiration for Shakspeare, unless they had found it fuming upwards like incense to the Pagan deities in ancient times from altars erected at every turning upon all the paths of men ?

But it is objected that inferior dramatists were sometimes preferred to Shakspeare ; and again, that vile travesties of Shakspeare were preferred to the authentic dramas. As to the first argument, let it be remembered that if the saints of the chapel are always in the same honour because *their* men are simply discharging a duty which, once due, will be due for ever, the saints of the theatre, on the other hand, must bend to the local genius, and to the very reasons for having a theatre at all. Men go thither for amusement ; this is the paramount purpose, and even acknowledged merit or absolute superiority must give way to it. Does a man at Paris expect to see Molière reprodued in proportion to his admitted precedency in the French drama ? On the contrary, that very precedency argues such a familiarisation with his works, that those who are in quest of relaxation will reasonably prefer any recent drama to that which,

having lost all its novelty, has lost much of its excitement. We speak of ordinary minds; but in cases of *public* entertainments, deriving part of their power from scenery and stage pomp, novelty is for all minds an essential condition of attraction. Moreover, in some departments of the comic, Beaumont and Fletcher, when writing in combination, really had a freedom and breadth of manner which excels the comedy of Shakspeare. As to the altered Shakspeare as taking precedency of the genuine Shakspeare no argument can be so frivolous. The public were never allowed a choice ; the great majority of an audience even now cannot be expected to carry the real Shakspeare in their mind, so as to pursue a comparison between that and the alteration. Their comparisons must be exclusively amongst what they have opportunities of seeing ; that is, between the various pieces presented to them by the managers of theatres. Further than this it is impossible for them to extend their office of judging and collating ; and the degenerate taste which substituted the caprices of Devenant, the rants of Dryden, or the filth of Tate, for the jewellery of Shakspeare, cannot with any justice be charged upon the public, not one in a thousand of whom was furnished with any means of comparing, but exclusively upon those (viz., theatrical managers) who had the very amplest. Yet even in excuse for *them* much may be said. The very length of some plays compelled them to make alterations. The best of Shakspeare's dramas, "King Lear," is the least fitted for representation ; and, even for the vilest alteration, it ought in candour to be considered

that possession is nine points of the law. He who would not have introduced was often obliged to retain.

Finally, it is urged that the small number of editions through which Shakspeare passed in the seventeenth century, furnishes a separate argument, and a conclusive one, against his popularity. We answer, that considering the bulk of his plays collectively, the editions were *not* few; compared with any known case, the copies sold of Shakspeare were quite as many as could be expected under the circumstances. Ten or fifteen times as much consideration went to the purchase of one great folio like Shakspeare, as would attend the purchase of a little volume like Waller or Donne. Without reviews, or newspapers, or advertisements to diffuse the knowledge of books, the progress of literature was necessarily slow, and its expansion narrow. But this is a topic which has always been treated unfairly, not with regard to Shakspeare only, but to Milton, as well as many others. The truth is, we have not facts enough to guide us; for the number of editions often tells nothing accurately as to the number of copies. With respect to Shakspeare it is certain that, had his masterpieces been gathered into small volumes, Shakspeare would have had a most extensive sale. As it was, there can be no doubt that, from his own generation, throughout the seventeenth century, and until the eighteenth began to accommodate, not any greater popularity in *him*, but a greater taste for reading in the public, his fame never ceased to be viewed as a national trophy of honour; and the most

illustrious men of the seventeenth century were no whit less fervent in their admiration than those of the eighteenth and the nineteenth, either as respected its strength and sincerity, or as respected its open profession.

It is therefore a false notion, that the general sympathy with the merits of Shakspeare ever beat with a languid or intermitting pulse. Undoubtedly, in times when the functions of critical journals and of newspapers were not at hand to diffuse or to strengthen the impressions which emanated from the capital, all opinions must have travelled slowly into the provinces. But even then, whilst the perfect organs of communication were wanting, indirect substitutes were supplied by the necessities of the times, or by the instincts of political zeal. Two channels especially lay open between the great central organ of the national mind and the remotest provinces. Parliaments were occasionally summoned (for the judges' circuits were too brief to produce much effect), and during their longest suspensions the nobility, with large retinues, continually resorted to the Court. But an intercourse more constant and more comprehensive was maintained through the agency of the two universities. Already, in the time of James I., the growing importance of the gentry, and the consequent birth of a new interest in political questions, had begun to express itself at Oxford, and still more so at Cambridge. Academic persons stationed themselves as sentinels at London, for the purpose of watching the Court and the course of public affairs. These persons wrote letters, like those

of the celebrated Joseph Mede, which we find in Ellis's Historical Collections, reporting to their fellow-collegians all the novelties of public life as they arose, or personally carried down such reports, and thus conducted the general feelings at the centre into lesser centres, from which again they were diffused into the ten thousand parishes of England ; for (with a very few exceptions in favour of poor benefices, Welsh or Cumbrian) every parish priest must unavoidably have spent his three years at one or other of the English universities. And by this mode of diffusion it is that we can explain the strength with which Shakspeare's thoughts and diction impressed themselves from a very early period upon the national literature, and even more generally upon the national thinking and conversation.

The question therefore revolves upon us in threefold difficulty. How, having stepped thus prematurely into this inheritance of fame, leaping as it were thus abruptly into the favour alike of princes and the enemies of princes, had it become possible that in his native place (honoured still more in the final testimonies of his preference when founding a family mansion), such a man's history, and the personal recollections which cling so affectionately to the great intellectual potentates who have recommended themselves by gracious manners, could so soon and so utterly have been obliterated ?

Malone, with childish irreflection, ascribes the loss of such memorials to the want of enthusiasm in his admirers. Local researches into private history had not then commenced. Such a taste, often petty

enough in its management, was the growth of after-ages. Else how came Spenser's life and fortunes to be so utterly overwhelmed in oblivion? No poet of a high order could be more popular.

The answer we believe to be this: Twenty-six years after Shakspeare's death commenced the great parliamentary war: this it was, and the local feuds arising to divide family from family, brother from brother, upon which we must charge the extinction of traditions and memorials, doubtless abundant up to that era. The parliamentary contest, it will be said, did not last above three years; the king's standard having been first raised at Nottingham in August 1642, and the battle of Naseby (which terminated the open warfare) having been fought in June 1645. Or even if we extend its duration to the surrender of the last garrison, that war terminated in the spring of 1646. And the brief explosions of insurrection or of Scottish invasion which occurred on subsequent occasions were all locally confined, and none came near to Warwick-shire, except the battle of Worcester, more than five years after. This is true, but a short war will do much to efface recent and merely personal memorials. And the following circumstances of the war were even more important than the general fact.

First of all, the very mansion founded by Shak-speare became the military head-quarters for the queen in 1644, when marching from the eastern coast of England to join the king in Oxford, and one such special visitation would be likely to do

more serious mischief in the way of extinction than many years of general warfare. Secondly, as a fact perhaps equally important, Birmingham, the chief town of Warwickshire and the adjacent district, the seat of our hardware manufactures, was the very focus of disaffection towards the royal cause. Not only, therefore, would this whole region suffer more from internal and spontaneous agitation, but it would be the more frequently traversed vindictively from without, and harassed by flying parties from Oxford, or others of the king's garrisons. Thirdly, even apart from the political aspects of Warwickshire, this county happens to be the central one of England as regards the roads between the north and south; and Birmingham has long been the great central axis in which all the radii from the four angles of England proper meet and intersect. Mere accident, therefore, of local position, much more when united with that avowed inveteracy of malignant feeling, which was bitter enough to rouse a reaction of bitterness in the mind of Lord Clarendon, would go far to account for the wreck of many memorials relating to Shakspeare, as well as for the subversion of that quiet and security for humble life in which the traditional memory finds its best *nidus*. Thus we obtain one solution, and perhaps the main one, of the otherwise mysterious oblivion which had swept away all traces of the mighty poet by the time when those quiet days revolved upon England in which again the solitary agent of learned research might roam in security from house to house, gleaning those personal remembrances which,

even in the fury of civil strife, might long have lingered by the chimney-corner. But the fierce furnace of war had probably, by its *local* ravages, scorched this field of natural tradition, and thinned the gleaner's inheritance by three parts out of four. This, we repeat, may be one part of the solution to this difficult problem.

And if another is still demanded ,possibly it may be found in the fact, hostile to the perfect consecration of Shakspeare's memory, that after all he was a player. Many a coarse-minded country gentleman or village pastor, who would have held his town glorified by the distinction of having sent forth a great judge or an eminent bishop, might disdain to cherish the personal recollections which surrounded one whom custom regarded as little above a mountebank, and the illiberal law as a vagabond. The same degrading appreciation attached both to the actor in plays and to their author. The contemptuous appellation of "play-book" served as readily to degrade the mighty volume which contained "Lear" and "Hamlet," as that of "play-actor" or "player-man" has always served with the illiberal or the fanatical to dishonour the persons of Roscius or of Garrick, of Talma or of Siddons. Nobody indeed was better aware of this than the noble-minded Shakspeare, and feelingly he has breathed forth in his sonnets this conscious oppression under which he lay of public opinion unfavourable by a double title to his own pretensions, for being both dramatic author and dramatic performer, he found himself heir to a twofold opprobrium, and at an era

of English society when the weight of that opprobrium was heaviest. In reality there was at this period a collision of forces acting in opposite directions upon the estimation of the stage and scenical art, and therefore of all the ministers in its equipage. Puritanism frowned upon these pursuits as ruinous to public morals; on the other hand, loyalty could not but tolerate what was patronised by the sovereign, and it happened that Elizabeth, James, and Charles I. were all alike lovers and promoters of theatrical amusements, which were indeed more indispensable to the relief of Court ceremony, and the monotony of aulic pomp, than in any other region of life. This royal support, and the consciousness that any brilliant success in these arts implied an unusual share of natural endowments, did something in mitigation of a scorn which must else have been intolerable to all generous natures.

But whatever prejudice might thus operate against the perfect sanctity of Shakspeare's posthumous reputation, it is certain that the splendour of his worldly success must have done much to obliterate that effect; his admirable colloquial talents a good deal, and his gracious affability still more. The wonder therefore will still remain, that Betterton, in less than a century from his death, should have been able to glean so little. And for the solution of this wonder we must throw ourselves chiefly upon the explanations we have made as to the Parliamentary war and the local ravages of its progress in the very district, in the very town and the very house.

If further arguments are still wanted to explain this mysterious abolition, we may refer the reader to the following succession of disastrous events, by which it should seem that a perfect malice of misfortune pursued the vestiges of the mighty poet's steps. In 1613 the Globe Theatre, with which he had been so long connected, was burned to the ground. Soon afterwards a great fire occurred in Stratford; and next (without counting upon the fire of London, just fifty years after his death, which, however, would consume many an important record from periods far more remote), the house of Ben Jonson, in which probably, as Mr. Campbell suggests, might be parts of his correspondence, was also burned. Finally, there was an old tradition that Lady Barnard, the sole granddaughter of Shakspeare, had carried off many of his papers from Stratford, and these papers have never since been traced.

In many of the elder Lives it has been asserted that John Shakspeare, the father of the poet, was a butcher, and in others that he was a woolstapler. It is now settled beyond dispute that he was a glover. This was his professed occupation in Stratford, though it is certain that, with this leading trade from which he took his denomination, he combined some collateral pursuits, and it is possible enough that as openings offered he may have meddled with many. In that age, and in a provincial town, nothing like the exquisite subdivision of labour was attempted which we now see realised in the great cities of Christendom. And one trade is often found to play into another with so much reciprocal advantage that even in our

own days we do not much wonder at an enterprising man in country places who combines several in his own person. Accordingly, John Shakspeare is known to have united with his town calling the rural and miscellaneous occupations of a farmer.

Meantime his avowed business stood upon a very different footing from the same trade as it is exercised in modern times. Gloves were in that age an article of dress more costly by much and more elaborately decorated than in our own. They were a customary present from some cities to the judges of assize and to other official persons—a custom of ancient standing, and in some places, we believe, still subsisting; and in such cases it is reasonable to suppose that the gloves must originally have been more valuable than the trivial modern article of the same name. So also, perhaps, in their origin of the gloves given at funerals. In reality, whenever the simplicity of an age makes it difficult to renew the parts of a wardrobe except in capital towns of difficult access, prudence suggests that such wares should be manufactured of more durable materials, and being so, they become obviously susceptible of more lavish ornament. But it will not follow from this essential difference in the gloves of Shakspeare's age that the glover's occupation was more lucrative. Doubtless he sold more costly gloves, and upon each pair had a larger profit, but for that very reason he sold fewer. Two or three gentlemen "of worship" in the neighbourhood might occasionally require a pair of gloves, but it is very doubtful whether any inhabitant of Stratford would ever call for so mere a luxury.

The practical result, at all events, of John Shakspeare's various pursuits does not appear permanently to have met the demands of his establishment, and in his maturer years there are indications still surviving that he was under a cloud of embarrassment. He certainly lost at one time his social position in the town of Stratford, but there is a strong presumption in *our* construction of the case that he finally retrieved it, and for this retrieval of a station which he had forfeited by personal misfortunes or neglect he was altogether indebted to the filial piety of his immortal son.

Meantime the earlier years of the elder Shakspeare wore the aspect of rising prosperity, however unsound might be the basis on which it rested. There can be little doubt that William Shakspeare, from his birth up to his tenth or perhaps his eleventh year, lived in careless plenty, and saw nothing in his father's house but that style of liberal housekeeping which has ever distinguished the upper yeomanry and the rural gentry of England. Probable enough it is that the resources for meeting this liberality were not strictly commensurate with the family income, but were sometimes allowed to entrench by means of loans or mortgages upon capital funds. The stress upon the family finances was perhaps at times severe; and that it was borne at all must be imputed to the large and even splendid portion which John Shakspeare received with his wife.

This lady—for such she really was in an eminent sense, by birth as well as by connections—bore the beautiful name of Mary Arden, a name derived from

the ancient forest district of the county; and doubtless she merits a more elaborate notice than our slender materials will furnish. To have been *the mother of Shakspeare*—how august a title to the reverence of infinite generations and of centuries beyond the vision of prophecy. A plausible hypothesis has been started in modern times, that the facial structure and that the intellectual conformation may be deduced more frequently from the corresponding characteristics in the mother than in the father. It is certain that no very great man has ever existed but that his greatness has been rehearsed and predicted in one or other of his parents. And it cannot be denied that in the most eminent men, where we have had the means of pursuing the investigation, the mother has more frequently been repeated and reproduced than the father. We have known cases where the mother has furnished all the intellect and the father all the moral sensibility; upon which assumption the wonder ceases that Cicero, Lord Chesterfield, and other brilliant men, who took the utmost pains with their sons, should have failed so conspicuously, for possibly the mothers had been women of excessive and even exemplary stupidity. In the case of Shakspeare, each parent, if we had any means of recovering their characteristics, could not fail to furnish a study of the most profound interest, and with regard to his mother in particular, if the modern hypothesis be true, and if we are indeed to deduce from *her* the stupendous intellect of her son, in that case she must have been a benefactress to her husband's family beyond the promises of fairy-

land or the dreams of romance, for it is certain that to her chiefly this family was also indebted for their worldly comfort.

Mary Arden was the youngest daughter and the heiress of Robert Arden of Wilmecote, Esq., in the county of Warwick. The family of Arden was even then of great antiquity. About one century and a quarter before the birth of William Shakspeare a person bearing the same name as his maternal grandfather had been returned by the commissioners in their list of the Warwickshire gentry ; he was there styled Robert Arden, Esq., of Bromich. This was in 1433, or the 12th year of Henry VI. In Henry VII.'s reign the Ardens received a grant of lands from the Crown ; and in 1568, four years after the birth of William Shakspeare, Edward Arden, of the same family, was sheriff of the county. Mary Arden was therefore a young lady of excellent descent and connections, and an heiress of considerable wealth. She brought to her husband, as a marriage portion, the landed estate of Asbies, which, upon any just valuation, must be considered as a handsome dowry for a woman of her station. As this point has been contested, and as it goes a great way towards determining the exact social position of the poet's parents, let us be excused for sifting it a little more narrowly than might else seem warranted by the proportions of our present Life. Every question which it can be reasonable to raise at all, it must be reasonable to treat with at least so much of minute research as may justify the conclusions which it is made to support.

The estate of Asbies contained fifty acres of arable land, six of meadow, and a right of common-age. What may we assume to have been the value of its fee-simple? Malone, who allows the total fortune of Mary Arden to have been £110 13s. 4d., is sure that the value of Asbies could not have been more than one hundred pounds. But why? Because, says he, the "average" rent of land at that time was no more than three shillings per acre. This we deny; but upon that assumption the total yearly rent of fifty-six acres would be exactly eight guineas. And therefore, in assigning the value of Asbies at one hundred pounds, it appears that Malone must have estimated the land at no more than twelve years' purchase, which would carry the value to £100 16s. "Even at this estimate," as the latest annotator on this subject *justly* observes, "Mary Arden's portion was a larger one than was usually given to a landed gentleman's daughter." But this writer objects to Malone's principle of valuation. "We find," says he, "that John Shakspeare also farmed the meadows of Tugton, containing sixteen acres, at the rate of eleven shillings per acre. Now, what proof has Mr. Malone adduced that the acres of Asbies were not as valuable as those of Tugton? And if they were so, the former estate must have been worth between three and four hundred pounds." In the main drift of his objections we concur with Mr. Campbell. But as they are liable to some criticism, let us clear the ground of all plausible cavils, and then see what will be the result. Malone, had he been alive, would probably

have answered, that Tugton was a farm specially privileged by nature, and that if any man contended for so unusual a rent as eleven shillings an acre for land not known to him, the *onus probandi* would lie upon *him*. Be it so; eleven shillings is certainly above the ordinary level of rent, but three shillings is below it. We contend that for tolerably good land, situated advantageously—that is, with a ready access to good markets and good fairs, such as those of Coventry, Birmingham, Gloucester, Worcester, Shrewsbury, &c.—one noble might be assumed as the annual rent; and that in such situations twenty years' purchase was not a valuation, even in Elizabeth's reign, very unusual. Let us, however, assume the rent at only five shillings, and land at sixteen years' purchase: upon this basis the rent would be £14, and the value of the fee-simple £224. Now, if it were required to equate that sum with its present value, a very operose calculation might be requisite. But contenting ourselves with the gross method of making such equations between 1560 and the current century—that is, multiplying by five—we shall find the capital value of the estate to be eleven hundred and twenty pounds, whilst the annual rent would be exactly seventy. But if the estate had been sold, and the purchase-money lent upon mortgage (the only safe mode of investing money at that time), the annual interest would have reached £28, equal to £140 of modern money; for mortgages in Elizabeth's age readily produced ten per cent.

A woman who should bring at this day an annual income of £140 to a provincial tradesman, living

in a sort of *rus in urbe*, according to the simple fashions of rustic life, would assuredly be considered as an excellent match. And there can be little doubt that Mary Arden's dowry it was which, for some ten or a dozen years succeeding to his marriage, raised her husband to so much social consideration in Stratford. In 1550 John Shakspeare is supposed to have first settled in Stratford, having migrated from some other part of Warwickshire. In 1557 he married Mary Arden; in 1565, the year subsequent to the birth of his son William, his third child, he was elected one of the aldermen; and in the year 1568 he became first magistrate of the town, by the title of high bailiff. This year we may assume to have been that in which the prosperity of this family reached its zenith; for in this year it was, over and above the presumptions furnished by his civic honours, that he obtained a grant of arms from Clarencieux of the Heralds' College. On this occasion he declared himself worth five hundred pounds derived from his ancestors. And we really cannot understand the right by which critics, living nearly three centuries from this time, undertake to know his affairs better than himself, and to tax him with either inaccuracy or falsehood. No man would be at leisure to court heraldic honours when he knew himself to be embarrassed, or apprehended that he soon might be so. A man whose anxieties had been fixed at all upon his daily livelihood would, by this chase after the aërial honours of heraldry, have made himself a butt for ridicule such as no fortitude could enable him to sustain.

In 1568, therefore, when his son William would be moving through his fifth year, John Shakspeare (now honoured by the designation of *Master*) would be found at times in the society of the neighbouring gentry. Ten years in advance of this period he was already in difficulties; but there is no proof that these difficulties had then reached a point of degradation or of memorable distress. The sole positive indications of his decaying condition are, that in 1578 he received an exemption from the small weekly assessment levied upon the aldermen of Stratford for the relief of the poor; and that in the following year (1579) he is found enrolled amongst the defaulters in the payment of taxes. The latter fact undoubtedly goes to prove that, like every man who is falling back in the world, he was occasionally in arrears. Paying taxes is not like the honours awarded or the processions regulated by Clarencieux: no man is ambitious of precedency there; and if a laggard pace in that duty is to be received as evidence of pauperism, nine-tenths of the English people might occasionally be classed as paupers. With respect to his liberation from the weekly assessment, that may bear a construction different from the one which it has received. This payment, which could never have been regarded as a burthen, not amounting to five pounds annually of our present money, may have been held up as an exponent of wealth and consideration; and John Shakspeare may have been required to resign it as an honourable distinction, not suitable to the circumstances of an embarrassed man. Finally, the fact of his being indebted to Robert Sadler, a baker,

in the sum of five pounds, and his being under the necessity of bringing a friend as security for the payment, proves nothing at all. There is not a town in Europe in which opulent men cannot be found that are backward in the payment of their debts. And the probability is, that Master Sadler acted like most people who, when they suppose a man to be going down in the world, feel their respect for him sensibly decaying, and think it wise to trample him under foot, provided only in that act of trampling they can squeeze out of him their own individual debt. Like that terrific chorus in Spohr's oratorio of "St. Paul," "*Stone him to death*" is the cry of the selfish and the illiberal amongst creditors, alike towards the just and the unjust amongst debtors.

It was the wise and beautiful prayer of Agar, "Give me neither poverty nor riches;" and doubtless, for quiet, for peace, and the *latentis semita vitæ*, that is the happiest dispensation. But perhaps, with a view to a school of discipline and of moral fortitude, it might be a more salutary prayer, "Give me riches *and* poverty, and afterwards neither;" for the transitional state between riches and poverty will teach a lesson both as to the baseness and the goodness of human nature, and will impress that lesson with a searching force, such as no borrowed experience ever can approach. Most probable it is that Shakspeare drew some of his powerful scenes in the "Timon of Athens," those which exhibit the vileness of ingratitude and the impassioned frenzy of misanthropy, from his personal recollections connected with the case of his own father. Possibly, though a

cloud of 270 years now veils it, this very Master Sadler, who was so urgent for his five pounds, and who so little apprehended that he should be called over the coals for it in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," may have sate for the portrait of that Lucullus who says of Timon :

> Alas, good lord ! a noble gentleman 'tis, if he would not keep so good a house. Many a time and often I have dined with him and told him on't ; and come again to supper to him, of purpose to have him spend less : and yet he would embrace no counsel, take no warning by my coming. Every man has his fault, and honesty is his ; I have told him on't, but I could never get him from it.

For certain years, perhaps, John Shakspeare moved on in darkness and sorrow :

> His familiars from his buried fortunes
> Slunk all away ; left their false vows with him,
> Like empty purses pick'd : and his poor self
> A dedicated beggar to the air,
> With his disease of all-shunn'd poverty,
> Walk'd, like contempt, alone.

We, however, at this day are chiefly interested in the case as it bears upon the education and youthful happiness of the poet. Now, if we suppose that from 1568, the high noon of the family prosperity, to 1578, the first year of their mature embarrassments, one-half the interval was passed in stationary sunshine and the latter half in the gradual twilight of declension, it will follow that the young William had completed his tenth year before he heard the first signals of distress ; and for so long a period his education would probably be conducted on as liberal

a scale as the resources of Stratford would allow. Through this earliest section of his life he would undoubtedly rank as a gentleman's son, possibly as the leader of his class in Stratford. But what rank he held through the next ten years, or, more generally, what was the standing in society of Shakspeare until he had created a new station for himself by his own exertions in the metropolis, is a question yet unsettled, but which has been debated as keenly as if it had some great dependencies. Upon this we shall observe that, could we by possibility be called to settle beforehand what rank were best for favouring the development of intellectual powers, the question might wear a face of deep practical importance ; but when the question is simply as to a matter of fact, what *was* the rank held by a man whose intellectual development has long ago been completed, this becomes a mere question of curiosity. The tree has fallen ; it is confessedly the noblest of all the forest ; and we must therefore conclude that the soil in which it flourished was either the best possible, or, if not so, that anything bad in its properties has been disarmed and neutralized by the vital forces of the plant or by the benignity of nature. If any future Shakspeare were likely to arise, it might be a problem of great interest to agitate whether the condition of a poor man or of a gentleman were best fitted to nurse and stimulate his faculties. But for the actual Shakspeare, since what he was he was, and since nothing greater can be imagined, it is now become a matter of little moment whether his course lay for fifteen or twenty years through the humilities of

absolute poverty or through the chequered paths of gentry lying in the shade. Whatever *was* must, in this case at least, have been the best, since it terminated in producing Shakspeare; and thus far we must all be optimists.

Yet still, it will be urged, the curiosity is not illiberal which would seek to ascertain the precise career through which Shakspeare ran. This we readily concede, and we are anxious ourselves to contribute anything in our power to the settlement of a point so obscure. What we have wished to protest against is the spirit of partisanship in which this question has too generally been discussed. For whilst some, with a foolish affectation of plebeian sympathies, overwhelm us with the insipid commonplaces about birth and ancient descent, as honours containing nothing meritorious, and rush eagerly into an ostentatious exhibition of all the circumstances which favour the notion of a humble station and humble connections; others, with equal forgetfulness of true dignity, plead with the intemperance and partiality of a legal advocate for the pretensions of Shakspeare to the hereditary rank of gentleman. Both parties violate the majesty of the subject. When we are seeking for the sources of the Euphrates or the St. Lawrence, we look for no proportions to the mighty volume of waters in that particular summit amongst the chain of mountains which embosoms its earliest fountains, nor are we shocked at the obscurity of these fountains. Pursuing the career of Mahommed, or of any man who has memorably impressed his own mind or agency upon the revolutions

of mankind, we feel solicitude about the circumstances which might surround his cradle to be altogether unseasonable and impertinent. Whether he were born in a hovel or a palace, whether he passed his infancy in squalid poverty or hedged around by the glittering spears of body-guards, as mere questions of fact may be interesting, but in the light of either accessories or counter-agencies to the native majesty of the subject are trivial and below all philosophic valuation. So with regard to the creator of Lear and Hamlet, of Othello and Macbeth; to him from whose golden urns the nations beyond the far Atlantic, the multitude of the isles, and the generations unborn in Australian climes, even to the realms of the rising sun (the ἀνατολαι ἡελιοιο), must in every age draw perennial streams of intellectual life, we feel that the little accidents of birth and social condition are so unspeakably below the grandeur of the theme, are so irrelevant and disproportioned to the real interest at issue, so incommensurable with any of its relations, that a biographer of Shakspeare at once denounces himself as below his subject if he can entertain such a question as seriously affecting the glory of the poet. In some legends of saints we find that they were born with a lambent circle or golden areola about their heads. This angelic coronet shed light alike upon the chambers of a cottage or a palace, upon the gloomy limits of a dungeon or the vast expansion of a cathedral; but the cottage, the palace, the dungeon, the cathedral, were all equally incapable of adding one ray of colour or one pencil of light to the supernatural halo.

Having therefore thus pointedly guarded ourselves from misconstruction, and consenting to entertain the question as one in which we, the worshippers of Shakspeare, have an interest of curiosity, but in which he, the object of our worship, has no interest of glory, we proceed to state what appears to us the result of the scanty facts surviving when collated with each other.

By his mother's side Shakspeare was an authentic gentleman. By his father's he would have stood in a more dubious position, but the effect of municipal honours to raise and illustrate an equivocal rank has always been acknowledged under the popular tendencies of our English political system. From the sort of lead, therefore, which John Shakspeare took at one time amongst his fellow-townsmen, and from his rank of first magistrate, we may presume that about the year 1568 he had placed himself at the head of the Stratford community. Afterwards he continued for some years to descend from this altitude, and the question is, at what point this gradual degradation may be supposed to have settled. Now we shall avow it as our opinion that the composition of society in Stratford was such that, even had the Shakspeare family maintained their superiority, the main body of their daily associates must still have been found amongst persons below the rank of gentry. The poet must inevitably have mixed chiefly with mechanics and humble tradesmen, for such people composed perhaps the total community. But had there even been a gentry in Stratford, since they would have marked the distinctions of their rank

chiefly by greater reserve of manners, it is probable that, after all, Shakspeare, with his enormity of delight in exhibitions of human nature, would have mostly cultivated that class of society in which the feelings are more elementary and simple, in which the thoughts speak a plainer language, and in which the restraints of factitious or conventional decorum are exchanged for the restraints of mere sexual decency. It is a noticeable fact to all who have looked upon human life with an eye of strict attention, that the abstract image of womanhood, in its loveliness, its delicacy, and its modesty, nowhere makes itself more impressive or more advantageously felt than in the humblest cottages, because it is there brought into immediate juxtaposition with the grossness of manners and the careless licence of language incident to the fathers and brothers of the house. And this is more especially true in a nation of unaffected sexual gallantry, such as the English and the Gothic races in general; since, under the immunity which their women enjoy from all servile labours of a coarse or out-of-doors order, by as much lower as they descend in the scale of rank, by so much more do they benefit under the force of contrast with the men of their own level. A young man of that class, however noble in appearance, is somewhat degraded in the eyes of women by the necessity which his indigence imposes of working under a master; but a beautiful young woman, in the very poorest family, unless she enters upon a life of domestic servitude (in which case her labours are light, suited to her sex, and withdrawn from the public eye), so long in fact

as she stays under her father's roof, is as perfectly her own mistress and *sui juris* as the daughter of an earl. This personal dignity, brought into stronger relief by the mercenary employments of her male connections, and the feminine gentleness of her voice and manners, exhibited under the same advantages of contrast, oftentimes combine to make a young cottage beauty as fascinating an object as any woman of any station.

Hence we may in part account for the great event of Shakspeare's early manhood—his premature marriage. It has always been known, or at least traditionally received for a fact, that Shakspeare had married whilst yet a boy, and that his wife was unaccountably older than himself. In the very earliest biographical sketch of the poet, compiled by Rowe from materials collected by Betterton the actor, it was stated (and that statement is now ascertained to have been correct), that he had married Anne Hathaway, "the daughter of a substantial yeoman." Further than this nothing was known. But in September 1836 was published a very remarkable document, which gives the assurance of law to the time and fact of this event, yet still, unless collated with another record, does nothing to lessen the mystery which had previously surrounded its circumstances. This document consists of two parts: the first, and principal, according to the logic of the case, though second according to the arrangement, being a *license* for the marriage of William Shakspeare with Anne Hathaway, under the condition "of *once* asking of the bannes of matrimony"—that

is, in effect, dispensing with two out of the three customary askings; the second or subordinate part of the document being a *bond* entered into by two sureties, viz., Fulke Sandells and John Rychardson, both described as *agricolæ* or yeomen, and both marksmen (that is, incapable of writing, and therefore subscribing by means of *marks*), for the payment of forty pounds sterling in the event of Shakspeare, yet a minor and incapable of binding himself, failing to fulfil the conditions of the license. In the bond, drawn up in Latin, there is no mention of Shakspeare's name; but in the license, which is altogether English, *his* name of course stands foremost; and as it may gratify the reader to see the very words and orthography of the original, we here extract the *operative* part of this document, prefacing only, that the license is attached by way of explanation to the bond:—"The condition of this obligation is suche, that if herafter there shall not appere any lawfull lett or impediment, by reason of any precontract, &c., but that Willm. Shagspere, one thone ptie" [on the one party], "and Anne Hathwey of Stratford, in the diocess of Worcester, maiden, may lawfully solemnize matrimony together; and in the same afterwards remaine and continew like man and wiffe. And, moreover, if the said Willm. Shagspere do not proceed to solemnization of mariadg with the said Anne Hathwey, without the consent of hir frinds;—then the said obligation" [viz., to pay forty pounds] "to be voyd and of none effect, or els to stand & abide in full force and vertue."

What are we to think of this document? Trepi-

dation and anxiety are written upon its face. The parties are not to be married by a special license — not even by an ordinary license; in that case no proclamation of banns, no public asking at all, would have been requisite. Economical scruples are consulted; and yet the regular movement of the marriage "through the bell-ropes" is disturbed. Economy, which retards the marriage, is here evidently in collision with some opposite principle which precipitates it. How is all this to be explained? Much light is afforded by the date when illustrated by another document. The bond bears date on the 28th day of November in the 25th year of our lady the queen; that is, in 1582. Now the baptism of Shakspeare's eldest child, Susanna, is registered on the 26th of May in the year following. Suppose, therefore, that his marriage was solemnized on the first day of December: it was barely possible that it could be earlier, considering that the sureties, drinking, perhaps, at Worcester throughout the 28th of November, would require the 29th, in so dreary a season, for their return to Stratford; after which some preparation might be requisite to the bride, since the marriage was *not* celebrated at Stratford. Next suppose the birth of Miss Susanna to have occurred, like her father's, two days before her baptism, viz., on the 24th of May. From December the 1st to May the 24th, both days inclusively, are 175 days; which, divided by seven, gives precisely twenty-five weeks; that is to say, six months, short by one week. Oh fie! Miss Susanna, you came rather before you were wanted.

Mr. Campbell's comment upon the affair is, that "*if* this was the case"—viz., if the baptism were really solemnized on the 26th of May—"the poet's first child would *appear* to have been born only six months and eleven days after the bond was entered into." And he then concludes that, on this assumption, "Miss Susanna Shakspeare came into the world a little prematurely." But this is to doubt where there never was any ground for doubting; the baptism was *certainly* on the 26th of May; and, in the next place, the calculation of six months and eleven days is sustained by substituting lunar months for calendar, and then only by supposing the marriage to have been celebrated on the very day of subscribing the bond in Worcester, and the baptism to have been coincident with the birth; of which suppositions the latter is improbable, and the former, considering the situation of Worcester, impossible.

Strange it is, that whilst all biographers have worked with so much zeal upon the most barren dates or most baseless traditions in the great poet's life, realising in a manner the chimeras of Laputa, and endeavouring "to extract sunbeams from cucumbers," such a story with regard to such an event, no fiction of village scandal, but involved in legal documents, a story so significant and so eloquent to the intelligent, should formerly have been dismissed without notice of any kind, and even now, after the discovery of 1836, with nothing beyond a slight conjectural insinuation. For our parts, we should have been the last amongst the biographers to unearth any forgotten scandal, or, after so vast a

lapse of time, and when the grave had shut out all but charitable thoughts, to point any moral censures at a simple case of natural frailty, youthful precipitancy of passion, of all trespasses the most venial, where the final intentions are honourable. But in this case there seems to have been something more in motion than passion or the ardour of youth. "I like not," says Parson Evans (alluding to Falstaff in masquerade), "I like not when a woman has a great peard; I spy a great peard under her muffler." Neither do we like the spectacle of a mature young woman, five years past her majority, wearing the semblance of having been led astray by a boy who had still two years and a half to run of his minority. Shakspeare himself, looking back on this part of his youthful history from his maturest years, breathes forth pathetic counsels against the errors into which his own inexperience had been ensnared. The disparity of years between himself and his wife he notices in a beautiful scene of the "Twelfth Night." The Duke Orsino, observing the sensibility which the pretended Cesario had betrayed on hearing some touching old snatches of a love strain, swears that his beardless page must have felt the passion of love, which the other admits. Upon this the dialogue proceeds thus:

Duke. What kind of woman is't?
Viola. Of your complexion.
Duke. She is not worth thee then:—What years?
Viola. I' faith,
About your years, my lord.
Duke. Too old, by heaven. *Let still the woman take*

An elder than herself; so wears she to him,
So sways she level in her husband's heart.
For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,
Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn,
Than women's are.

Viola. I think it well, my lord.

Duke. Then *let thy love be younger than thyself,*
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent;
For women are as roses, whose fair flower
Being once displayed, doth fall that very hour.

These counsels were uttered nearly twenty years after the event in his own life to which they probably look back; for this play is supposed to have been written in Shakspeare's thirty-eighth year. And we may read an earnestness, in pressing the point as to the *inverted* disparity of years, which indicates pretty clearly an appeal to the lessons of his personal experience. But his other indiscretion, in having yielded so far to passion and opportunity as to crop by prelibation, and before they were hallowed, those flowers of paradise which belonged to his marriage-day; this he adverts to with even more solemnity of sorrow, and with more pointed energy of moral reproof, in the very last drama which is supposed to have proceeded from his pen, and therefore with the force and sanctity of testamentary counsel. "The Tempest" is all but ascertained to have been composed in 1611, that is, about five years before the poet's death; and indeed could not have been composed much earlier, for the very incident which suggested the basis of the plot, and of the local scene—viz., the shipwreck

of Sir George Somers on the Bermudas (which were in consequence denominated the Somers Islands)—did not occur until the year 1609. In the opening of the fourth act Prospero formally betrothes his daughter to Ferdinand, and in doing so he pays the prince a well-merited compliment of having "worthily purchas'd" this rich jewel by the patience with which, for her sake, he had supported harsh usage and other painful circumstances of his trial. But, he adds solemnly,

> If thou dost break her virgin knot before
> All sanctimonious ceremonies may
> With full and holy rite be minister'd,—

in that case what would follow?

> No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall,
> To make this contract grow; *but barren hate,*
> *Sour-ey'd disdain and discord shall bestrew*
> *The union of your bed with weeds so loathly*
> *That you shall hate it both.* Therefore take heed,
> As Hymen's lamps shall light you.

The young prince assures him, in reply, that no strength of opportunity, concurring with the uttermost temptation, not

> the murkiest den
> The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion
> Our worser genius can———

should ever prevail to lay asleep his jealousy of self-control, so as to take any advantage of Miranda's innocence. And he adds an argument for this abstinence, by way of reminding Prospero, that not honour only, but even prudential care of his own

happiness, is interested in the observance of his promise. Any unhallowed anticipation would, as he insinuates,

> Take away
> The edge of that day's celebration,
> When I shall think, or Phœbus' steeds are founder'd,
> Or night kept chain'd below;

that is, when even the winged hours would seem to move too slowly. Even thus Prospero is not quite satisfied; during his subsequent dialogue with Ariel we are to suppose that Ferdinand, in conversing apart with Miranda, betrays more impassioned ardour than the wise magician altogether approves. The prince's caresses have not been unobserved; and thus Prospero renews his warning:

> Look thou be true; do not give dalliance
> Too much the rein; the strongest oaths are straw
> To the fire i' the blood; be more abstemious,
> Or else—good-night your vow.

The royal lover reassures him of his loyalty to his engagements; and again the wise father, so honourably jealous for his daughter, professes himself satisfied with the prince's pledges.

Now in all these emphatic warnings, uttering the language "of that sad wisdom folly leaves behind," who can avoid reading, as in subtle hieroglyphics, the secret record of Shakspeare's own nuptial disappointments? We, indeed—that is, universal posterity through every age—have reason to rejoice in these disappointments, for to them, past all doubt, we are indebted for Shakspeare's subsequent migration to London and his public occupation, which, giving

him a deep pecuniary interest in the productions of his pen, such as no other literary application of his powers could have approached in that day, were eventually the means of drawing forth those divine works which have survived their author for our everlasting benefit.

Our own reading and deciphering of the whole case is as follows. The Shakspeares were a handsome family, both father and sons. This we assume upon the following grounds:—First, on the presumption arising out of John Shakspeare's having won the favour of a young heiress higher in rank than himself; secondly, on the presumption involved in the fact of three amongst his four sons having gone upon the stage, to which the most obvious (and perhaps in those days a *sine quâ non*) recommendation would be a good person and a pleasing countenance; thirdly, on the direct evidence of Aubrey, who assures us that William Shakspeare was a handsome and well-shaped man; fourthly, on the implicit evidence of the Stratford monument, which exhibits a man of good figure and noble countenance; fifthly, on the confirmation of this evidence by the Chandos portrait, which exhibits noble features, illustrated by the utmost sweetness of expression; sixthly, on the selection of theatrical parts which it is known that Shakespeare personated, most of them being such as required some dignity of form, viz., kings, the athletic (though aged) follower of an athletic young man, and supernatural beings. On these grounds, direct or circumstantial, we believe ourselves warranted in assuming that William Shakspeare was a handsome

and even noble-looking boy. Miss Anne Hathaway had herself probably some personal attractions; and if an indigent girl, who looked for no pecuniary advantages, would probably have been early sought in marriage. But as the daughter of "a substantial yeoman," who would expect some fortune in his daughter's suitors, she had, to speak coarsely, a little outlived her market. Time she had none to lose. William Shakspeare pleased her eye; and the gentleness of his nature made him an apt subject for female blandishments, possibly for female arts. Without imputing, however, to this Anne Hathaway anything so hateful as a settled plot for ensnaring him, it was easy enough for a mature woman, armed with such inevitable advantages of experience and of self-possession, to draw onward a blushing novice; and, without directly creating opportunities, to place him in the way of turning to account such as naturally offered. Young boys are generally flattered by the condescending notice of grown-up women; and perhaps Shakespeare's own lines upon a similar situation, to a young boy adorned with the same natural gifts as himself, may give us the key to the result:

> Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won;
> Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assail'd;
> And, when a woman woos, what woman's son
> Will sourly leave her till he have prevail'd?

Once, indeed, entangled in such a pursuit, any person of manly feelings would be sensible that he had no retreat; *that* would be—to insult a woman, grievously to wound her sexual pride, and to insure her lasting

scorn and hatred. These were consequences which the gentle-minded Shakspeare could not face; he pursued his good fortunes, half perhaps in heedlessness, half in desperation, until he was roused by the clamorous displeasure of her family upon first discovering the situation of their kinswoman. For such a situation there could be but one atonement, and that was hurried forward by both parties; whilst, out of delicacy towards the bride, the wedding was not celebrated in Stratford (where the register contains no notice of such an event), nor, as Malone imagined, in Weston-upon-Avon, that being in the diocese of Gloucester; but in some parish, as yet undiscovered, in the diocese of Worcester.

But now arose a serious question as to the future maintenance of the young people. John Shakspeare was depressed in his circumstances, and he had other children besides William, viz., three sons and a daughter. The elder Lives have represented him as burdened with ten; but this was an error, arising out of the confusion between John Shakspeare the glover and John Shakspeare a shoemaker. This error has been thus far of use, that, by exposing the fact of two John Shakspeares (not kinsmen) residing in Stratford-upon-Avon, it has satisfactorily proved the name to be amongst those which are locally indigenous to Warwickshire. Meantime it is now ascertained that John Shakspeare the glover had only eight children, viz., four daughters and four sons. The order of their succession was this:—Joan, Margaret, WILLIAM, Gilbert, a second Joan, Anne, Richard, and Edmund. Three of the

daughters—viz., the two eldest of the family, Joan and Margaret, together with Anne—died in childhood: all the rest attained mature ages, and of these William was the eldest. This might give some advantage in his father's regard; but in a question of pecuniary provision precedency amongst the children of an insolvent is nearly nominal. For the present, John Shakspeare could do little for his son; and under these circumstances perhaps the father of Anne Hathaway would come forward to assist the new-married couple. This condition of dependency would furnish matter for painful feelings and irritating words: the youthful husband, whose mind would be expanding as rapidly as the leaves and blossoms of spring-time in polar latitudes, would soon come to appreciate the sort of wiles by which he had been caught. The female mind is quick, and almost gifted with the power of witchcraft, to decipher what is passing in the thoughts of familiar companions. Silent and forbearing as William Shakspeare might be, Anne, his staid wife, would read his secret reproaches; ill would she dissemble her wrath, and the less so from the consciousness of having deserved them. It is no uncommon case for women to feel anger in connection with one subject, and to express it in connection with another; which other, perhaps (except as a serviceable mask), would have been a matter of indifference to their feelings. Anne would therefore reply to those inevitable reproaches which her own sense must presume to be lurking in her husband's heart, by others equally stinging, on his

inability to support his family, and on his obligations to her father's purse. Shakspeare, we may be sure, would be ruminating every hour on the means of his deliverance from so painful a dependency ; and at length, after four years' conjugal discord, he would resolve upon that plan of solitary emigration to the metropolis which, at the same time that it released him from the humiliation of domestic feuds, succeeded so splendidly for his worldly prosperity, and with a train of consequences so vast for all future ages.

Such, we are persuaded, was the real course of Shakspeare's transition from schoolboy pursuits to his public career ; and upon the known temperament of Shakspeare, his genial disposition to enjoy life without disturbing his enjoyment by fretting anxieties, we build the conclusion, that had his friends furnished him with ampler funds, and had his marriage been well assorted or happy, we—the world of posterity—should have lost the whole benefit and delight which we have since reaped from his matchless faculties. The motives which drove him *from* Stratford are clear enough ; but what motives determined his course *to* London, and especially to the stage, still remains to be explained. Stratford-upon-Avon, lying in the high road from London through Oxford to Birmingham (or more generally to the North), had been continually visited by some of the best comedians during Shakspeare's childhood. One or two of the most respectable metropolitan actors were natives of Stratford. These would be well known to the elder Shakspeare. But,

apart from that accident, it is notorious that mere legal necessity and usage would compel all companies of actors, upon coming into any town, to seek, in the first place, from the chief magistrate, a license for opening a theatre, and next, over and above this public sanction, to seek his personal favour and patronage. As an alderman, therefore, but still more whilst clothed with the official powers of chief magistrate, the poet's father would have opportunities of doing essential services to many persons connected with the London stage. The conversation of comedians acquainted with books, fresh from the keen and sparkling circles of the metropolis, and filled with racy anecdotes of the Court, as well as of public life generally, could not but have been fascinating by comparison with the stagnant society of Stratford. Hospitalities on a liberal scale would be offered to these men: not impossibly this fact might be one principal key to those dilapidations which the family estate had suffered. These actors, on *their* part, would retain a grateful sense of the kindness they had received, and would seek to repay it to John Shakspeare, now that he was depressed in his fortunes, as opportunities might offer. His eldest son, growing up a handsome young man, and beyond all doubt from his earliest days of most splendid colloquial powers—for assuredly of *him* it may be taken for granted,

Nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, videre—

would be often reproached in a friendly way for

burying himself in a country life. These overtures, prompted alike by gratitude to the father and a real selfish interest in the talents of the son, would at length take a definite shape: and, upon some clear understanding as to the terms of such an arrangement, William Shakspeare would at length (about 1586, according to the received account—that is, in the fifth year of his married life, and the twenty-third or twenty-fourth of his age), unaccompanied by wife or children, translate himself to London. Later than 1586 it could not well be, for already in 1589 it has been recently ascertained that he held a share in the property of a leading theatre.

We must here stop to notice—and the reader will allow us to notice with summary indignation—the slanderous and idle tale which represents Shakspeare as having fled to London, in the character of a criminal, from the persecutions of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecot. This tale has long been propagated under two separate impulses: chiefly, perhaps, under the vulgar love of pointed and glaring contrasts; the splendour of the man was in this instance brought into a sort of epigrammatic antithesis with the humility of his fortunes; secondly, under a baser impulse, the malicious pleasure of seeing a great man degraded. Accordingly, as in the case of Milton, it has been affirmed that Shakspeare had suffered corporal chastisement; in fact (we abhor to utter such words), that he had been judicially whipped. Now, first of all, let us mark the inconsistency of this tale: the poet was whipped—that is, he was punished most disproportionately—and yet he

fled to avoid punishment. Next, we are informed that his offence was deer-stealing, and from the park of Sir Thomas Lucy; and it has been well ascertained that Sir Thomas had no deer and had no park. Moreover, deer-stealing was regarded by our ancestors exactly as poaching is regarded by us. Deer ran wild in all great forests; and no offence was looked upon as so venial, none so compatible with a noble Robin-Hood style of character, as this very trespass upon what was regarded as *feræ naturæ*, and not at all as domestic property. But had it been otherwise, a trespass was not punishable with whipping, nor had Sir Thomas Lucy the power to irritate a whole community like Stratford-upon-Avon by branding with permanent disgrace a young man so closely connected with three at least of the best families in the neighbourhood. Besides, had Shakspeare suffered any dishonour of that kind, the scandal would infallibly have pursued him at his very heels to London; and in that case, Greene, who has left on record, in a posthumous work of 1592, his malicious feelings towards Shakspeare, could not have failed to notice it. For be it remembered that a judicial flagellation contains a twofold ignominy: flagellation is ignominious in its own nature, even though unjustly inflicted, and by a ruffian; secondly, any judicial punishment is ignominious, even though not wearing a shade of personal degradation. Now, a judicial flagellation includes both features of dishonour; and is it to be imagined that an enemy, searching with the diligence of malice for matter against Shakspeare, should have failed, six years

after the event, to hear of that very memorable disgrace which had exiled him from Stratford, and was the very occasion of his first resorting to London ; or that a leading company of players in the metropolis, *one of whom*, and a chief one, *was his own townsman*, should cheerfully adopt into their society, as an honoured partner, a young man yet flagrant from the lash of the executioner or the beadle ?

This tale is fabulous, and rotten to its core ; yet even this does less dishonour to Shakspeare's memory than the sequel attached to it. A sort of scurrilous rondeau, consisting of nine lines, so loathsome in its brutal stupidity and so vulgar in its expression that we shall not pollute our pages by transcribing it, has been imputed to Shakspeare ever since the days of the credulous Rowe. The total point of this idiot's drivel consists in calling Sir Thomas "an asse"; and well it justifies the poet's own remark—"Let there be gall enough in thy ink, no matter though thou write with a goose pen." Our own belief is, that these lines were a production of Charles II.'s reign, and applied to a Sir Thomas Lucy, not very far removed, if at all, from the age of him who first picked up the precious filth : the phrase "parliament *member*" we believe to be quite unknown in the colloquial use of Queen Elizabeth's reign.

But that we may rid ourselves once and for ever of this outrageous calumny upon Shakspeare's memory, we shall pursue the story to its final stage. Even Malone has been thoughtless enough to accredit this closing chapter, which contains, in fact, such a superfetation of folly as the annals of human

dulness do not exceed. Let us recapitulate the points of the story. A baronet who has no deer and no park is supposed to persecute a poet for stealing these aërial deer out of this aërial park, both lying in *nephelococcygia*. The poet sleeps upon this wrong for eighteen years; but at length, hearing that his persecutor is dead and buried, he conceives bloody thoughts of revenge. And this revenge he purposes to execute by picking a hole in his dead enemy's coat-of-arms. Is this coat-of-arms, then, Sir Thomas Lucy's? Why, no: Malone admits that it is not. For the poet, suddenly recollecting that this ridicule would settle upon the son of his enemy, selects another coat-of-arms, with which his dead enemy never had any connection, and he spends his thunder and lightning upon this irrelevant object; and, after all, the ridicule itself lies in a Welshman's mispronouncing one single heraldic term—a Welshman who mispronounces all words. The last act of the poet's malice recalls to us a sort of jest-book story of an Irishman, the vulgarity of which the reader will pardon in consideration of its relevancy. The Irishman having lost a pair of silk stockings, mentions to a friend that he has taken steps for recovering them by an advertisement, offering a reward to the finder. His friend objects that the cost of advertising and the reward would eat out the full value of the silk stockings. But to this the Irishman replies with a knowing air, that he is not so green as to have overlooked *that;* and that, to keep down the reward, he had advertised the stockings as worsted. Not at all less flagrant is the

bull ascribed to Shakspeare when he is made to punish a dead man by personalities meant for his exclusive ear, through his coat-of-arms, but at the same time, with the express purpose of blunting and defeating the edge of his own scurrility, is made to substitute for the real arms some others which had no more relation to the dead enemy than they had to the poet himself. This is the very sublime of folly, beyond which human dotage cannot advance.

It is painful, indeed, and dishonourable to human nature, that whenever men of vulgar habits and of poor education wish to impress us with a feeling of respect for a man's talents, they are sure to cite, by way of evidence, some gross instance of malignity. Power, in their minds, is best illustrated by malice or by the infliction of pain. To this unwelcome fact we have some evidence in the wretched tale which we have just dismissed; and there is another of the same description to be found in all Lives of Shakspeare, which we will expose to the contempt of the reader whilst we are in this field of discussion, that we may not afterwards have to resume so disgusting a subject.

This poet, who was a model of gracious benignity in his manners, and of whom, amidst our general ignorance, thus much is perfectly established, that the term *gentle* was almost as generally and by prescriptive right associated with his name as the affix of *venerable* with Bede, or *judicious* with Hooker, is alleged to have insulted a friend by an imaginary epitaph beginning "*Ten in the Hundred*," and supposing him to be damned, yet without wit enough

(which surely the Stratford bellman could have furnished) for devising any, even fanciful, reason for such a supposition: upon which the comment of some foolish critic is—"The *sharpness of the satire* is said to have stung the man so much that he never forgave it." We have heard of the sting in the tail atoning for the brainless head; but in this doggerel the tail is surely as stingless as the head is brainless. For, 1*st*, *Ten in the Hundred* could be no reproach in Shakspeare's time, any more than to call a man *Three and a Half per Cent.* in this present year 1838; except, indeed, amongst those foolish persons who built their morality upon the Jewish ceremonial law. Shakspeare himself took ten per cent. 2*dly*, It happens that John Coombe, so far from being the object of the poet's scurrility, or viewing the poet as an object of implacable resentment, was a Stratford friend, that one of his family was affectionately remembered in Shakspeare's will by the bequest of his sword, and that John Coombe himself recorded his perfect charity with Shakspeare by leaving him a legacy of £5 sterling. And in this lies the key to the whole story. For, 3*dly*, the four lines were written and printed before Shakspeare was born. The name Combe is a common one, and some stupid fellow, who had seen the name in Shakspeare's will, and happened also to have seen the lines in a collection of epigrams, chose to connect the cases by attributing an identity to the two John Combes, though at war with chronology.

Finally, there is another specimen of doggerel attributed to Shakspeare, which is not equally un-

worthy of him, because not equally malignant, but otherwise equally below his intellect no less than his scholarship; we mean the inscription on his grave-stone. This, as a sort of *siste viator* appeal to future sextons, is worthy of the grave-digger or the parish-clerk, who was probably its author. Or it may have been an antique formula, like the vulgar record of ownership in books—

> Anthony Timothy Dolthead's book,
> God give him grace therein to look.

Thus far the matter is of little importance; and it might have been supposed that malignity itself could hardly have imputed such trash to Shakspeare. But when we find, even in this short compass, scarcely wider than the posy of a ring, room found for traducing the poet's memory, it becomes important to say, that the leading sentiment, the horror expressed at any disturbance offered to his bones, is not one to which Shakspeare could have attached the slightest weight; far less could have outraged the sanctities of place and subject by affixing to any sentiment whatever (and, according to the fiction of the case, his farewell sentiment) the sanction of a curse.

Filial veneration and piety towards the memory of this great man have led us into a digression that might have been unseasonable in any cause less weighty than one having for its object to deliver his honoured name from a load of the most brutal malignity. Never more, we hope and venture to believe, will any thoughtless biographer impute to

Shakspeare the asinine doggerel with which the uncritical blundering of his earliest biographer has caused his name to be dishonoured. We now resume the thread of our biography. The stream of history is centuries in working itself clear of any calumny with which it has once been polluted.

Most readers will be aware of an old story, according to which Shakspeare gained his livelihood, for some time after coming to London, by holding the horses of those who rode to the play. This legend is as idle as any one of those which we have just exposed. No custom ever existed of riding on horseback to the play. Gentlemen, who rode valuable horses, would assuredly not expose them systematically to the injury of standing exposed to cold for two or even four hours; and persons of inferior rank would not ride on horseback in the town. Besides, had such a custom ever existed, stables (or sheds at least) would soon have arisen to meet the public wants; and in some of the dramatic sketches of the day, which noticed every fashion as it arose, this would not have been overlooked. The story is traced originally to Sir William Davenant. Betterton, the actor, who professed to have received it from him, passed it onwards to Rowe, he to Pope, Pope to Bishop Newton the editor of Milton, and Newton to Dr. Johnson. This pedigree of the fable, however, adds nothing to its credit, and multiplies the chances of some mistake. Another fable, not much less absurd, represents Shakspeare as having from the very first been borne upon the establishment of the theatre, and so far contradicts the other

fable, but originally in the very humble character of *call-boy* or deputy prompter, whose business it was to summon each performer according to his order of coming upon the stage. This story, however, quite as much as the other, is irreconcilable with the discovery recently made by Mr. Collier, that in 1589 Shakspeare was a shareholder in the important property of a principal London theatre. It seems destined that all the undoubted facts of Shakspeare's life should come to us through the channel of legal documents, which are better evidence even than imperial medals; whilst, on the other hand, all the fabulous anecdotes, not having an attorney's seal to them, seem to have been the fictions of the wonder-maker. The plain presumption from the record of Shakspeare's situation in 1589, coupled with the fact that his arrival in London was possibly not until 1587, but, according to the earliest account, not before 1586, a space of time which leaves but little room for any remarkable changes of situation, seems to be that, either in requital of services done to the players by the poet's family, or in consideration of money advanced by his father-in-law, or on account of Shakspeare's personal accomplishments as an actor and as an adapter of dramatic works to the stage,—for one of these reasons, or for all of them united, William Shakspeare, about the twenty-third year of his age, was adopted into the partnership of a respectable histrionic company, possessing a first-rate theatre in the metropolis. If 1586 were the year in which he came up to London, it seems probable enough that his immediate motive to that

step was the increasing distress of his father, for in that year John Shakspeare resigned the office of alderman. There is, however, a bare possibility that Shakspeare might have gone to London about the time when he completed his twenty-first year—that is, in the spring of 1585, but not earlier. Nearly two years after the birth of his eldest daughter Susanna, his wife lay in for a second and a *last* time; but she then brought her husband twins, a son and a daughter. These children were baptized in February of the year 1585; so that Shakspeare's whole family of three children were born and baptized two months before he completed his majority. The twins were baptized by the names of Hamnet and Judith, those being the names of two amongst their sponsors, viz., Mr. Sadler and his wife. Hamnet, which is a remarkable name in itself, becomes still more so from its resemblance to the immortal name of Hamlet the Dane; it was, however, the real baptismal name of Mr. Sadler, a friend of Shakspeare's, about fourteen years older than himself. Shakspeare's son must then have been most interesting to his heart, both as a twin-child and as his only boy. He died in 1596, when he was about eleven years old. Both daughters survived their father, both married, both left issue, and thus gave a chance for continuing the succession from the great poet. But all the four grandchildren died without offspring.

Of Shakspeare personally, at least of Shakspeare the man as distinguished from the author, there remains little more to record. Already, in 1592, Greene, in his posthumous "Groat's-worth of Wit,"

had expressed the earliest vocation of Shakspeare in the following sentence:—"There is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers; in his own conceit the only *Shakscene* in a acountry!" This alludes to Shakspeare's office of re-casting, and even re-composing, dramatic works. so as to fit them for representation; and Master Greene. it is probable, had suffered in his self-estimation or in his purse by the alterations in some piece of his own which the duty of Shakspeare to the general interests of the theatre had obliged him to make. In 1591 it has been supposed that Shakspeare wrote his first drama, the "Two Gentlemen of Verona," the least characteristically marked of all his plays, and, with the exception of "Love's Labour's Lost," the least interesting.

From this year (1591) to that of 1611 are just twenty years, within which space lie the whole dramatic creations of Shakspeare, averaging nearly one for every six months. In 1611 was written the "Tempest," which is supposed to have been the last of all Shakspeare's works. Even on that account, as Mr. Campbell feelingly observes, it has "a sort of sacredness:" and it is a most remarkable fact, and one calculated to make a man superstitious, that in this play the great enchanter Prospero, in whom, "*as if conscious*," says Mr. Campbell, "*that this would be his last work,* the poet has been *inspired to typify himself as* a wise, potent, and *benevolent magician*," of whom, indeed, as of Shakspeare himself, it may be said, that "within that circle" (the circle of his own art) "none durst tread but he," solemnly and for

ever renounces his mysterious functions, symbolically breaks his enchanter's wand, and declares that he will bury his books, his science, and his secrets,

> Deeper than did ever plummet sound.

Nay, it is even ominous that in this play, and from the voice of Prospero, issues that magnificent prophecy of the total destruction which should one day swallow up

> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit.

And this prophecy is followed immediately by a most profound ejaculation, gathering into one pathetic abstraction the total philosophy of life:

> We are such stuff
> As dreams are made of; and our little life
> Is rounded by a sleep;

that is, in effect, our life is a little tract of feverish vigils, surrounded and islanded by a shoreless ocean of sleep—sleep before birth, sleep after death.

These remarkable passages were probably not undesigned: but if we suppose them to have been thrown off without conscious notice of their tendencies, then, according to the superstition of the ancient Grecians, they would have been regarded as prefiguring words, prompted by the secret genius that accompanies every man, such as insure along with them their own accomplishment. With or without intention, however, it is believed that Shakspeare wrote nothing more after this exquisite romantic drama. With respect to the remainder of his personal history,

Dr. Drake and others have supposed that during the twenty years from 1591 to 1611 he visited Stratford often, and latterly once a-year.

In 1589 he had possessed some share in a theatre; in 1596 he had a considerable share. Through Lord Southampton, as a surviving friend of Lord Essex, who was viewed as the martyr to his Scottish politics, there can be no doubt that Shakspeare had acquired the favour of James I.; and accordingly, on the 29th of May 1603, about two months after the king's accession to the throne of England, a patent was granted to the company of players who possessed the Globe Theatre, in which patent Shakspeare's name stands second. This patent raised the company to the rank of his Majesty's servants, whereas previously they are supposed to have been simply the servants of the Lord Chamberlain. Perhaps it was in grateful acknowledgment of this royal favour that Shakspeare afterwards, in 1606, paid that sublime compliment to the house of Stuart which is involved in the vision shown to Macbeth. This vision is managed with exquisite skill: it was impossible to display the whole series of princes from Macbeth to James I.; but he beholds the posterity of Banquo, one "gold-bound brow" succeeding to another, until he comes to an eighth apparition of a Scottish king,

> Who bears a glass
> Which shows him many more; and some he sees
> Who *twofold* balls and *treble* sceptres carry;

thus bringing down without tedium the long succes-

sion to the very person of James I. by the symbolic image of the two crowns united on one head.

About the beginning of the century Shakspeare had become rich enough to purchase the best house in Stratford, called *The Great House*, which name he altered to *New Place;* and in 1602 he bought 107 acres adjacent to this house for a sum (£320) corresponding to about 1,500 guineas of modern money. Malone thinks that he purchased the house as early as 1597 ; and it is certain that about that time he was able to assist his father in obtaining a renewed grant of arms from the Heralds' College, and therefore, of course, to re-establish his father's fortunes. Ten years of well-directed industry—viz., from 1591 to 1601—and the prosperity of the theatre in which he was a proprietor had raised him to affluence ; and after another ten years, improved with the same success, he was able to retire with an income of £300, or (according to the customary computations) in modern money of £1,500 per annum. Shakspeare was in fact the first man of letters, Pope the second, and Sir Walter Scott the third, who in Great Britain has ever realised a large fortune by literature—or in Christendom, if we except Voltaire and two dubious cases in Italy. The four or five latter years of his life Shakspeare passed in dignified ease, in profound meditation we may be sure, and in universal respect, at his native town of Stratford ; and there he died on the 23rd of April 1616.

His daughter Susanna had been married, on the 5th of June of the year 1607, to Dr. John Hall a

physician in Stratford. The doctor died in November 1635, aged sixty; his wife, at the age of sixty-six, on July 11, 1640. They had one child, a daughter, named Elizabeth, born in 1608, married April 22, 1626, to Thomas Nash, Esq., left a widow in 1647, and subsequently remarried to Sir John Barnard; but this Lady Barnard, the sole granddaughter of the poet, had no children by either marriage. The other daughter, Judith, on February 10, 1616 (about ten weeks before her father's death) married Mr. Thomas Quiney of Stratford, by whom she had three sons, Shakspeare, Richard, and Thomas. Judith was about thirty-one years old at the time of her marriage; and living just forty-six years afterwards, she died in February 1662, at the age of seventy-seven. Her three sons died without issue; and thus, in the direct lineal descent, it is certain that no representative has survived of this transcendent poet, the most august amongst created intellects.

After this review of Shakspeare's life it becomes our duty to take a summary survey of his works, of his intellectual powers, and of his station in literature —a station which is now irrevocably settled, not so much (which happens in other cases) by a vast overbalance of favourable suffrages, or by acclamation; not so much by the *voices* of those who admire him up to the verge of idolatry, as by the *acts* of those who everywhere seek for his works among the primal necessities of life, demand them, and crave them as they do their daily bread; not so much by eulogy openly proclaiming itself, as by the silent homage recorded in the endless multiplication of what he has

bequeathed us; not so much by his own compatriots, who, with regard to almost every other author, compose the total amount of his *effective* audience, as by the unanimous "All hail!" of intellectual Christendom; finally, not by the hasty partisanship of his own generation, nor by the biassed judgment of an age trained in the same modes of feeling and of thinking with himself, but by the solemn award of generation succeeding to generation, of one age correcting the obliquities or peculiarities of another; by the verdict of two hundred and thirty years, which have now elapsed since the very *latest* of his creations, or of two hundred and forty-seven years if we date from the earliest: a verdict which has been continually revived and re-opened, probed, searched, vexed, by criticism in every spirit, from the most genial and intelligent down to the most malignant and scurrilously hostile which feeble heads and great ignorance could suggest, when co-operating with impure hearts and narrow sensibilities; a verdict, in short, sustained and countersigned by a longer series of writers, many of them eminent for wit or learning, than were ever before congregated upon any inquest relating to any author, be he who he might, ancient or modern, Pagan or Christian. It was a most witty saying with respect to a piratical and knavish publisher, who made a trade of insulting the memories of deceased authors by forged writings, that he was "among the new terrors of death." But in the gravest sense it may be affirmed of Shakspeare that he is among the modern luxuries of life; that life, in fact, is a new thing, and one more to be coveted,

since Shakspeare has extended the domains of human consciousness, and pushed its dark frontiers into regions not so much as dimly descried or even suspected before his time, far less illuminated (as now they are) by beauty and tropical luxuriance of life. For instance—a single instance, indeed one which in itself is a world of new revelation—the possible beauty of the female character had not been seen as in a dream before Shakspeare called into perfect life the radiant shapes of Desdemona, of Imogene, of Hermione, of Perdita, of Ophelia, of Miranda, and many others. The Una of Spenser, earlier by ten or fifteen years than most of these, was an idealised portrait of female innocence and virgin purity, but too shadowy and unreal for a dramatic reality. And as to the Grecian classics, let not the reader imagine for an instant that any prototype in this field of Shakspearian power can be looked for there. The *Antigone* and the *Electra* of the tragic poets are the two leading female characters that classical antiquity offers to our respect, but assuredly not to our impassioned love, as disciplined and exalted in the school of Shakspeare. They challenge our admiration, severe, and even stern, as impersonations of filial duty, cleaving to the steps of a desolate and afflicted old man ; or of sisterly affection, maintaining the rights of a brother under circumstances of peril, of desertion, and consequently of perfect self-reliance. Iphigenia, again, though not dramatically coming before us in her own person, but according to the beautiful report of a spectator, presents us with a fine statuesque model of heroic fortitude, and of one whose

young heart, even in the very agonies of her cruel immolation, refused to forget, by a single indecorous gesture, or so much as a moment's neglect of her own princely descent, that she herself was "a lady in the land." These are fine marble groups, but they are not the warm breathing realities of Shakspeare; there is "no speculation" in their cold marble eyes; the breath of life is not in their nostrils; the fine pulses of womanly sensibilities are not throbbing in their bosoms. And besides this immeasurable difference between the cold moony reflexes of life, as exhibited by the power of Grecian art, and the true sunny life of Shakspeare, it must be observed that the Antigones, &c., of the antique put forward but one single trait of character, like the aloe with its single blossom: this solitary feature is presented to us as an abstraction, and as an insulated quality; whereas in Shakspeare all is presented in the *concrete;* that is to say, not brought forward in relief, as by some effort of an anatomical artist, but embodied and imbedded, so to speak, as by the force of a creative nature, in the complex system of a human life; a life in which all the elements move and play simultaneously, and with something more than mere simultaneity or co-existence, acting and re-acting each upon the other—nay, even acting by each other and through each other. In Shakspeare's characters is felt for ever a real *organic* life, where each is for the whole and in the whole, and where the whole is for each and in each. They only are real incarnations.

The Greek poets could not exhibit any approximations to *female* character without violating the truth

of Grecian life, and shocking the feelings of the audience. The drama with the Greeks, as with us, though much less than with us, was a picture of human life ; and that which could not occur in life could not wisely be exhibited on the stage. Now, in ancient Greece, women were secluded from the society of men. The conventual sequestration of the γυναικωνίτις, or female apartment of the house, and the Mahommedan consecration of its threshold against the ingress of males, had been transplanted from Asia into Greece thousands of years perhaps before either convents or Mahommed existed. Thus barred from all open social intercourse, women could not develop or express any character by word or action. Even to *have* a character, violated, to a Grecian mind, the ideal portrait of feminine excellence ; whence, perhaps, partly the too generic, too little individualised, style of Grecian beauty. But prominently to *express* a character was impossible under the common tenor of Grecian life, unless when high tragical catastrophes transcended the decorums of that tenor, or for a brief interval raised the curtain which veiled it. Hence the subordinate part which women play upon the Greek stage in all but some half-dozen cases. In the paramount tragedy on that stage, the model tragedy, the *Œdipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, there is virtually no woman at all ; for Jocasta is a party to the story merely as the dead Laius or the self-murdered Sphinx was a party—viz., by her contributions to the fatalities of the event, not by anything she does or says spontaneously. In fact, the Greek poet, if a wise poet, could not address

himself genially to a task in which he must begin by shocking the sensibilities of his countrymen. And hence followed, not only the dearth of female characters in the Grecian drama, but also a second result still more favourable to the sense of a new power evolved by Shakspeare. Whenever the common law of Grecian life did give way, it was, as we have observed, to the suspending force of some great convulsion or tragical catastrophe. This for a moment (like an earthquake in a nunnery) would set at liberty even the timid, fluttering Grecian women, those doves of the dove-cot, and would call some of them into action. But which? Precisely those of energetic and masculine minds; the timid and feminine would but shrink the more from public gaze and from tumult. Thus it happened that such female characters as *were* exhibited in Greece could not but be the harsh and the severe. If a gentle Ismene appeared for a moment in contest with some energetic sister Antigone (and chiefly, perhaps by way of drawing out the fiercer character of that sister), she was soon dismissed as unfit for scenical effect. So that not only were female characters few, but, moreover, of these few the majority were but repetitions of masculine qualities in female persons. Female agency being seldom summoned on the stage except when it had received a sort of special dispensation from its sexual character, by some terrific convulsions of the house or the city, naturally it assumed the style of action suited to these circumstances. And hence it arose that not woman as she differed from man, but woman as she

resembled man—woman, in short, seen under circumstances so dreadful as to abolish the effect of sexual distinction, was the woman of the Greek tragedy. And hence generally arose for Shakspeare the wider field, and the more astonishing by its perfect novelty, when he first introduced female characters, not as mere varieties or echoes of masculine characters, a Medea or Clytemnestra, or a vindictive Hecuba, the mere tigress of the tragic tiger, but female characters that had the appropriate beauty of female nature; woman no longer grand, terrific, and repulsive, but woman "after her kind"—the other hemisphere of the dramatic world; woman running through the vast gamut of womanly loveliness; woman as emancipated, exalted, ennobled, under a new law of Christian morality; woman the sister and co-equal of man, no longer his slave, his prisoner, and sometimes his rebel. "It is a far cry to Loch Awe;" and from the Athenian stage to the stage of Shakspeare, it may be said, is a prodigious interval. True; but prodigious as it is, there is really nothing between them. The Roman stage, at least the tragic stage, as is well known, was put out, as by an extinguisher, by the cruel amphitheatre, just as a candle is made pale and ridiculous by daylight. Those who were fresh from the real murders of the bloody amphitheatre regarded with contempt the mimic murders of the stage. Stimulation too coarse and too intense had its usual effect in making the sensibilities callous. Christian emperors arose at length, who abolished the amphitheatre in its bloodier features. But by that time the genius of the tragic muse had long

slept the sleep of death ; and that muse had no resurrection until the age of Shakspeare. So that, notwithstanding a gulf of nineteen centuries and upwards separates Shakspeare from Euripides, the last of the surviving Greek tragedians, the one is still the nearest successor of the other, just as Connaught and the islands in Clew Bay are next neighbours to America, although three thousand watery columns, each of a cubic mile in dimensions, divide them from each other.

A second reason which lends an emphasis of novelty and effective power to Shakspeare's female world, is a peculiar fact of contrast which exists between that and his corresponding world of men. Let us explain. The purpose and the intention of the Grecian stage was not primarily to develop human *character*, whether in men or in women ; human *fates* were its object, great tragic situations under the mighty control of a vast cloudy destiny, dimly descried at intervals, and brooding over human life by mysterious agencies and for mysterious ends. Man, no longer the representative of an august *will*—man, the passion-puppet of fate, could not with any effect display what we call a character which is a distinction between man and man, emanating originally from the will, and expressing its determinations, moving under the large variety of human impulses. The will is the central pivot of character, and this was obliterated, thwarted, cancelled by the dark fatalism which brooded over the Grecian stage. That explanation will sufficiently clear up the reason why marked or complex variety

of character was slighted by the great principles of the Greek tragedy. And every scholar who has studied that grand drama of Greece with feeling—that drama so magnificent, so regal, so stately—and who has thoughtfully investigated its principles and its difference from the English drama, will acknowledge that powerful and elaborate character—character, for instance, that could employ the fiftieth part of that profound analysis which has been applied to Hamlet, to Falstaff, to Lear, to Othello, and applied by Mrs. Jamieson so admirably to the full development of the Shakspearian heroines—would have been as much wasted, nay, would have been defeated, and interrupted the blind agencies of fate, just in the same way as it would injure the shadowy grandeur of a ghost to individualise it too much. Milton's angels are slightly touched, superficially touched, with differences of character, but they are such differences, so simple and general, as are just sufficient to rescue them from the reproach applied to Virgil's "*fortemque Gyan, fortemque Cloanthem;*" just sufficient to make them knowable apart. Pliny speaks of painters who painted in one or two colours; and, as respects the angelic characters, Milton does so—he is *monochromatic*. So, and for reasons resting upon the same ultimate philosophy, were the mighty architects of the Greek tragedy. They also were monochromatic; they also, as to the characters of their persons, painted in one colour. And so far there might have been the same novelty in Shakspeare's men as in his women. There *might* have been, but the reason why there is *not* must be sought

in the fact that History, the muse of History, had there even been no such muse as Melpomene, would have forced us into an acquaintance with human character. History, as the representative of actual life, of real man, gives us powerful delineations of character in its chief agents—that is, in men ; and therefore it is that Shakspeare, the absolute creator of female character, was but the mightiest of all painters with regard to male character. Take a single instance. The Antony of Shakspeare, immortal for its execution, is found, after all, as regards the primary conception, in history. Shakspeare's delineation is but the expansion of the germ already pre-existing, by way of scattered fragments, in Cicero's Philippics, in Cicero's Letters, in Appian, &c. But Cleopatra, equally fine, is a pure creation of art. The situation and the scenic circumstances belong to history, but the character belongs to Shakspeare.

In the great world therefore of woman, as the interpreter of the shifting phases and the lunar varieties of that mighty changeable planet, that lovely satellite of man, Shakspeare stands not the first only, not the original only, but is yet the sole authentic oracle of truth. Woman, therefore, the beauty of the female mind, *this* is one great field of his power. The supernatural world, the world of apparitions, *that* is another ; for reasons which it would be easy to give, reasons emanating from the gross mythology of the ancients, no Grecian, no Roman, could have conceived a ghost. That shadowy conception, the protesting apparition, the awful projection of the human conscience, belongs

to the Christian mind; and in all Christendom, who, let us ask, who, but Shakspeare, has found the power for effectually working this mysterious mode of being? In summoning back to earth "the majesty of buried Denmark," how like an awful necromancer does Shakspeare appear! All the pomps and grandeurs which religion, which the grave, which the popular superstition had gathered about the subject of apparitions, are here converted to his purpose, and bend to one awful effect. The wormy grave brought into antagonism with the scenting of the early dawn; the trumpet of resurrection suggested, and again as an antagonist idea to the crowing of the cock (a bird ennobled in the Christian mythus by the part he is made to play at the Crucifixion); its starting "as a guilty thing" placed in opposition to its majestic expression of offended dignity when struck at by the partisans of the sentinels; its awful allusions to the secrets of its prison-house; its ubiquity, contrasted with its local presence; its aërial substance, yet clothed in palpable armour; the heart-shaking solemnity of its language, and the appropriate scenery of its haunt —viz., the ramparts of a capital fortress, with no witnesses but a few gentlemen mounting guard at the dead of night: what a mist, what a *mirage* of vapour, is here accumulated, through which the dreadful being in the centre looms upon us in far larger proportions than could have happened had it been insulated and left naked of this circumstantial pomp! In the "Tempest," again, what new modes of life, preternatural, yet far as the poles from the

spiritualities of religion! Ariel in antithesis to Caliban! What is most ethereal to what is most animal! A phantom of air, an abstraction of the dawn and of vesper sunlights, a bodiless sylph on the one hand; on the other a gross carnal monster, like the Miltonic Asmodai, "the fleshliest incubus" among the fiends, and yet so far ennobled into interest by his intellectual power, and by the grandeur of misanthropy! In the "Midsummer Night's Dream," again, we have the old traditional fairy, a lovely mode of preternatural life, remodified by Shakspeare's eternal talisman. Oberon and Titania remind us at first glance of Ariel; they approach, but how far they recede; they are like—"like, but oh, how different!" And in no other exhibition of this dreamy population of the moonlight forests and forest-lawns are the circumstantial proprieties of fairy life so exquisitely imagined, sustained, or expressed. The dialogue between Oberon and Titania is, of itself and taken separately from its connection, one of the most delightful poetic scenes that literature affords. The witches in "Macbeth" are another variety of supernatural life, in which Shakspeare's power to enchant and to disenchant are alike portentous. The circumstances of the blasted heath, the army at a distance, the withered attire of the mysterious hags, and the choral litanies of their fiendish Sabbath, are as finely imagined in their kind as those which herald and which surround the ghost in "Hamlet." There we see the *positive* of Shakspeare's superior power. But now turn and look to the *negative*. At a time when the trials of

witches, the royal book on demonology, and popular superstition (all so far useful, as they prepared a basis of undoubting faith for the poet's serious use of such agencies) had degraded and polluted the ideas of these mysterious beings by many mean associations, Shakspeare does not fear to employ them in high tragedy (a tragedy, moreover, which, though not the very greatest of his efforts as an intellectual whole, nor as a struggle of passion, is *among* the greatest in any view, and positively *the* greatest for scenical grandeur, and in that respect makes the nearest approach of all English tragedies to the Grecian model); he does not fear to introduce, for the same appalling effect as that for which Æschylus introduced the Eumenides, a triad of old women, concerning whom an English wit has remarked this grotesque peculiarity in the popular creed of that day, that although potent over winds and storms, in league with powers of darkness, they yet stood in awe of the constable;—yet, relying on his own supreme power to disenchant as well as to enchant, to create and to uncreate, he mixes these women and their dark machineries with the power of armies, with the agencies of kings, and the fortunes of martial kingdoms. Such was the sovereignty of this poet, so mighty its compass!

A third fund of Shakspeare's peculiar power lies in his teeming fertility of fine thoughts and sentiments. From his works alone might be gathered a golden bead-roll of thoughts the deepest, subtlest, most pathetic, and yet most catholic and universally intelligible; the most characteristic also, and appro-

priate to the particular person, the situation, and the case ; yet at the same time applicable to the circumstances of every human being under all the accidents of life and all vicissitudes of fortune. But this subject offers so vast a field of observation, it being so eminently the prerogative of Shakspeare to have thought more finely and more extensively than all other poets combined, that we cannot wrong the dignity of such a theme by doing more, in our narrow limits, than simply noticing it as one of the emblazonries upon Shakspeare's shield.

Fourthly, we shall indicate (and, as in the last case, barely indicate, without attempting in so vast a field to offer any inadequate illustrations) one mode of Shakspeare's dramatic excellence which hitherto has not attracted any special or separate notice. We allude to the forms of life and natural human passion as apparent in the structure of his dialogue. Among the many defects and infirmities of the French and of the Italian drama, indeed we may say of the Greek, the dialogue proceeds always by independent speeches, replying indeed to each other, but never modified in its several openings by the momentary effect of its several terminal forms immediately preceding. Now, in Shakspeare, who first set an example of that most important innovation, in all his impassioned dialogues each reply or rejoinder seems the mere rebound of the previous speech. Every form of natural interruption breaking through the restraints of ceremony under the impulses of tempestuous passion ; every form of hasty interrogative, ardent reiteration when a ques-

tion has been evaded; every form of scornful repetition of the hostile words; every impatient continuation of the hostile statement; in short, all modes and formulæ by which anger, hurry, fretfulness, scorn, impatience, or excitement under any movement whatever, can disturb or modify or dislocate the formal bookish style of commencement,—these are as rife in Shakspeare's dialogue as in life itself; and how much vivacity, how profound a verisimilitude, they add to the scenic effect as an imitation of human passion and real life, we need not say. A volume might be written illustrating the vast varieties of Shakspeare's art and power in this one field of improvement; another volume might be dedicated to the exposure of the lifeless and unnatural result from the opposite practice in the foreign stages of France and Italy. And we may truly say, that were Shakspeare distinguished from them by this single feature of nature and propriety, he would on that account alone have merited a great immortality.

GOETHE.

GOETHE.

JOHN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE, a man of commanding influence in the literature of modern Germany throughout the latter half of his long life, and possessing two separate claims upon our notice: one in right of his own unquestionable talents; and another, much stronger, though less direct, arising out of his position, and the extravagant partisanship put forward on his behalf for the last forty years. The literary body in all countries, and for reasons which rest upon a sounder basis than that of private jealousies, have always been disposed to a republican simplicity in all that regards the assumption of rank and personal pretensions. *Valeat quantum valere potest* is the form of license to every man's ambition, coupled with its caution: let his influence and authority be commensurate with his attested value; and because no man in the present infinity of human speculation, and the present multiformity of human power, can hope for more than a very limited superiority, there is an end at once to all *absolute* dictatorship. The dictatorship in any case could be only *relative* and in relation to a single department of art or knowledge;

and this for a reason stronger even than that already noticed, viz., the vast extent of the field on which the intellect is now summoned to employ itself. That objection, as it applies only to the degree of the difficulty, might be met by a corresponding degree of mental energy ; such a thing may be supposed at least. But another difficulty there is, of a profounder character, which cannot be so easily parried : those who have reflected at all upon the fine arts know that power of one kind is often inconsistent, positively incompatible, with power of another kind. For example, the dramatic mind is incompatible with the epic. And though we should consent to suppose that some intellect might arise endowed upon a scale of such angelic comprehensiveness as to vibrate equally and indifferently towards either pole, still it is next to impossible, in the exercise and culture of the two powers, but some bias must arise which would give that advantage to the one over the other which the right arm has over the left. But the supposition, the very case put, is baseless, and countenanced by no precedent. Yet under this previous difficulty, and with regard to a literature convulsed, if any ever was, by an almost total anarchy, it is a fact notorious to all who take an interest in Germany and its concerns, that Goethe did in one way or other, through the length and breadth of that vast country, establish a supremacy of influence wholly unexampled ; a supremacy indeed perilous, in a less honourable man, to those whom he might chance to hate, and with regard to himself thus far unfortunate, that it conferred upon every work proceeding from his pen a

sort of papal indulgence, an immunity from criticism, or even from the appeals of good sense, such as it is not wholesome that any man should enjoy. Yet we repeat that German literature was and is in a condition of total anarchy: with this solitary exception, no name, even in the most narrow section of knowledge or of power, has ever been able in that country to challenge unconditional reverence; whereas, with us and in France, name the science, name the art, and we will name the dominant professor; a difference which partly arises out of the fact that England and France are governed in their opinions by two or three capital cities, whilst Germany looks for its leadership to as many cities as there are *residenzen* and universities: for instance, the little territory with which Goethe was connected presented no less than two such public lights; Weimar, the *residenz* or privileged abode of the Grand Duke, and Jena, the university founded by that house. Partly, however, this difference may be due to the greater restlessness, and to the greater energy as respects mere speculation of the German mind. But no matter whence arising, or how interpreted, the fact is what we have described: absolute confusion, the "anarch old" of Milton is the one deity whose sceptre is there paramount; and yet *there* it was, in that very realm of chaos, that Goethe built his throne. That he must have looked with trepidation and perplexity upon his wild empire and its "dark foundations," may be supposed. The tenure was uncertain to *him* as regarded its duration; to us it is equally uncertain, and in fact mysterious as regards its origin. Mean-

time the mere fact, contrasted with the general tendencies of the German literary world, is sufficient to justify a notice, somewhat circumstantial, of the man in whose favour, whether naturally by force of genius or by accident concurring with intrigue, so unexampled a result was effected.

Goethe was born at noonday on the 28th of August 1749, in his father's house at Frankfort-on-the-Maine. The circumstances of his birth were thus far remarkable, that, unless Goethe's vanity deceived him, they led to a happy revolution hitherto retarded by female delicacy falsely directed. From some error of the midwife who attended his mother, the infant Goethe appeared to be still-born. Sons there were as yet none from this marriage; everybody was therefore interested in the child's life; and the panic which arose in consequence, having survived its immediate occasion, was improved into a public resolution (for which no doubt society stood ready at that moment) to found some course of public instruction from this time forward for those who undertook professionally the critical duties of accoucheur.

We have noticed the house in which Goethe was born, as well as the city. Both were remarkable, and fitted to leave lasting impressions upon a young person of sensibility. As to the city, its antiquity is not merely venerable, but almost mysterious; towers were at that time to be found in the mouldering lines of its earliest defences which belonged to the age of Charlemagne, or one still earlier; battlements adapted to a mode of warfare anterior even to that

of feudalism or romance. The customs, usages, and local privileges of Frankfort, and the rural districts adjacent, were of a corresponding character. Festivals were annually celebrated at a short distance from the walls, which had descended from a dateless antiquity. Everything which met the eye spoke the language of elder ages ; whilst the river on which the place was seated, its great fair, which still held the rank of the greatest in Christendom, and its connection with the throne of Cæsar and his inauguration, by giving to Frankfort an interest and a public character in the eyes of all Germany, had the effect of countersigning, as it were, by state authority, the importance which she otherwise challenged to her ancestral distinctions. Fit house for such a city, and in due keeping with the general scenery, was that of Goethe's father. It had in fact been composed out of two contiguous houses ; that accident had made it spacious and rambling in its plan ; whilst a further irregularity had grown out of the original difference in point of level between the corresponding stories of the two houses, making it necessary to connect the rooms of the same *suite* by short flights of steps. Some of these features were no doubt removed by the recast of the house under the name of " repairs " (to evade a city byelaw), afterwards executed by his father ; but such was the house of Goethe's infancy, and in all other circumstances of style and furnishing equally antique.

The spirit of society in Frankfort, without a Court, a university, or a learned body of any extent, or a resident nobility in its neighbourhood, could not be

expected to display any very high standard of polish. Yet, on the other hand, as an independent city, governed by its own separate laws and tribunals (that privilege of *autonomy* so dearly valued by ancient Greece), and possessing besides a resident corps of jurisprudents and of agents in various ranks for managing the interests of the German emperor and other princes, Frankfort had the means within herself of giving a liberal tone to the pursuits of her superior citizens, and of co-operating in no inconsiderable degree with the general movement of the times, political or intellectual. The memoirs of Goethe himself, and in particular the picture there given of his own family, as well as other contemporary glimpses of German domestic society in those days, are sufficient to show that much knowledge, much true cultivation of mind, much sound refinement of taste, were then distributed through the middle classes of German society ; meaning by that very indeterminate expression those classes which for Frankfort composed the aristocracy, viz., all who had daily leisure, and regular funds for employlng it to advantage. It is not necessary to add—because that is a fact applicable to all stages of society—that Frankfort presented many and various specimens of original talent, moving upon all directions of human speculation.

Yet, with this general allowance made for the capacities of the place, it is too evident that for the most part they lay inert and undeveloped. In many respects Frankfort resembled an English cathedral city, according to the standard of such places seventy

years ago, not, that is to say, like Carlisle in this day, where a considerable manufacture exists, but like Chester as it is yet. The chapter of a cathedral, the resident ecclesiastics attached to the duties of so large an establishment, men always well educated, and generally having families, compose the original *nucleus* around which soon gathers all that part of the local gentry who, for any purpose, whether of education for their children or of social enjoyment for themselves, seek the advantages of a town. Hither resort all the timid old ladies who wish for conversation or other forms of social amusement; hither resort the valetudinarians, male or female, by way of commanding superior medical advice at a cost not absolutely ruinous to themselves, and multitudes besides, with narrow incomes, to whom these quiet retreats are so many cities of refuge.

Such in one view they really are, and yet in another they have a vicious constitution. Cathedral cities in England, imperial cities without manufactures in Germany, are all in an improgressive condition. The public employments of every class in such places continue the same from generation to generation. The amount of superior families oscillates rather than changes—that is, it fluctuates within fixed limits; and for all inferior families, being composed either of shopkeepers or of menial servants, they are determined by the number, or, which on a large average is the same, by the pecuniary power of their employers. Hence it arises that room is made for one man, in whatever line of dependence, only by the death of another, and the constant

increments of the population are carried off into other cities. Not less is the difference of such cities as regards the standard of manners: how striking is the soft and urbane tone of the lower orders in a cathedral city, or in a watering-place dependent upon ladies, contrasted with the bold, often insolent, demeanour of a self-dependent artisan or mutinous mechanic of Manchester and Glasgow.

Children, however, are interested in the state of society around them chiefly as it affects their parents. Those of Goethe were respectable, and perhaps tolerably representative of the general condition in their own rank. An English authoress of great talent, in her "Characteristics of Goethe," has too much countenanced the notion that he owed his intellectual advantages exclusively to his mother. Of this there is no proof. His mother wins more esteem from the reader of this day because she was a cheerful woman of serene temper, brought into advantageous comparison with a husband much older than herself, whom circumstances had rendered moody, fitful, sometimes capricious, and confessedly obstinate in that degree which Pope has taught us to think connected with inveterate error:

> Stiff in opinion, always in the wrong,

unhappily presents an association too often actually occurring in nature to leave much chance for error in presuming either quality from the other. And in fact Goethe's father was so uniformly obstinate in pressing his own views upon all who belonged to him, whenever he did come forward in an attitude of

activity, that his family had much reason to be thankful for the rarity of such displays. Fortunately for them, his indolence neutralised his obstinacy. And the worst shape in which his troublesome temper showed itself was in what concerned the religious reading of the family. Once begun, the worst book as well as the best, the longest no less than the shortest, was to be steadfastly read through to the last word of the last volume ; no excess of yawning availed to obtain a reprieve—not, adds his son, though he were himself the leader of the yawners. As an illustration he mentions Bowyer's " History of the Popes ; " which awful series of records, the catacombs, as it were, in the palace of history, were actually traversed from one end to the other of the endless *suite* by the unfortunate house of Goethe. Allowing, however, for the father's unamiableness in this one point, upon all intellectual ground both parents seem to have met very much upon a level. Two illustrations may suffice, one of which occurred during the infancy of Goethe. The science of education was at that time making its first rude motions towards an ampler development, and amongst other reforms then floating in the general mind was one for eradicating the childish fear of ghosts, &c. The young Goethes, as it happened, slept, not in separate beds only, but in separate rooms ; and not unfrequently the poor children, under the stinging terrors of their lonely situation, stole away from their " forms," to speak in the hunter's phrase, and sought to rejoin each other. But in these attempts they were liable to surprises from the enemy ; papa and

mamma were both on the alert, and often intercepted the young deserter by a cross-march or an ambuscade; in which cases each had a separate policy for enforcing obedience. The father, upon his general system of "perseverance," compelled the fugitive back to his quarters, and in effect exhorted him to persist in being frightened out of his wits. To his wife's gentle heart that course appeared cruel, and she reclaimed the delinquent by bribes; the peaches which her garden wall produced being the fund from which she chiefly drew her supplies for this branch of the secret service. What were her winter bribes, when the long nights would seem to lie heaviest on the exchequer, is not said. Speaking seriously, no man of sense can suppose that a course of suffering from terrors the most awful, under whatever influence supported, whether under the naked force of compulsion or of *that* connected with bribes, could have any final effect in mitigating the passion of awe, connected by our very dreams with the shadowy and the invisible, or in tranquillising the infantine imagination.

A second illustration involves a great moral event in the history of Goethe, as it was, in fact, the first occasion of his receiving impressions at war with his religious creed. Piety is so beautiful an ornament of the youthful mind, doubt or distrust so unnatural a growth from confiding innocence, that an infant freethinker is heard of not so much with disgust as with perplexity. A sense of the ludicrous is apt to intermingle, and we lose our natural horror of the result in wonder at its origin. Yet in this instance

there is no room for doubt; the fact and the occasion are both on record; there can be no question about the date; and finally, the accuser is no other than the accused. Goethe's own pen it is which proclaims that already, in the early part of his seventh year, his reliance upon God as a moral governor had suffered a violent shock—was shaken, if not undermined. On the 1st of November 1755 occurred the great earthquake at Lisbon. Upon a double account, this event occupied the thoughts of all Europe for an unusual term of time: both as an expression upon a larger scale than usual of the mysterious physical agency concerned in earthquakes, and also for the awful human tragedy which attended either the earthquake itself, or its immediate sequel in the sudden irruption of the Tagus. Sixty thousand persons, victims to the dark power in its first or its second *avatar*, attested the Titanic scale upon which it worked. Here it was that the shallow piety of the Germans found a stumbling-block. Those who have read any circumstantial history of the physical signs which preceded this earthquake, are aware that in England and Northern Germany many singular phenomena were observed, more or less manifestly connected with the same dark agency which terminated at Lisbon, and running before this final catastrophe at times so accurately varying with the distances as to furnish something like a scale for measuring the velocity with which it moved. These German phenomena, circulated rapidly over all Germany by the journals of every class, had seemed to give to the Germans

a nearer and more domestic interest in the great event than belonged to them merely in their universal character of humanity. It is also well known to observers of national characteristics that amongst the Germans the household charities, the *pieties of the hearth*, as they may be called, exist, if not really in greater strength, yet with much less of the usual balances or restraints. A German father, for example, is like the grandfather of other nations; and thus a piety, which in its own nature scarcely seems liable to excess, takes in its external aspect too often an air of effeminate imbecility. These two considerations are necessary to explain the intensity with which this Lisbon tragedy laid hold of the German mind, and chiefly under the one single aspect of its *undistinguishing* fury. Women, children, old men—these doubtless had been largely involved in the perishing sixty thousand; and that reflection, it would seem from Goethe's account, had so far embittered the sympathy of the Germans with their distant Portuguese brethren, that in the Frankfort discussions sullen murmurs had gradually ripened into bold impeachments of Providence. There can be no gloomier form of infidelity than that which questions the moral attributes of the Great Being in whose hands are the final destinies of us all. Such, however, was the form of Goethe's earliest scepticism, such its origin—caught up from the very echoes which rang through the streets of Frankfort when the subject occupied all men's minds; and such, for anything that appears, continued to be its form thenceforwards to the close of

his life, if speculations so crude could be said to have any form at all. Many are the analogies, some close ones, between England and Germany with regard to the circle of changes they have run through, political or social, for a century back. The challenges are frequent to a comparison ; and sometimes the result would be to the advantage of Germany, more often to ours. But in religious philosophy, which in reality is the true *popular* philosophy, how vast is the superiority on the side of this country ! Not a shopkeeper or mechanic, we may venture to say, but would have felt this obvious truth, that surely the Lisbon earthquake yielded no fresh lesson, no peculiar moral, beyond what belonged to every man's experience in every age. A passage in the New Testament about the fall of the tower of Siloam, and the just construction of that event, had already anticipated the difficulty, if such it could be thought. Not to mention that calamities upon the same scale in the earliest age of Christianity—the fall of the amphitheatre at Fidenæ, or the destruction of Pompeii—had presented the same problem as the Lisbon earthquake. Nay, it is presented daily in the humblest individual case, where wrong is triumphant over right, or innocence confounded with guilt in one common disaster. And that the parents of Goethe should have authorized his error, if only by their silence, argues a degree of ignorance in them which could not have co-existed with much superior knowledge in the public mind.

Goethe in his Memoirs (book vi.) commends his father for the zeal with which he superintended the

education of his children ; but apparently it was a zeal without knowledge. Many things were taught imperfectly, but all casually, and as chance suggested them. Italian was studied a little, because the elder Goethe had made an Italian tour, and had collected some Italian books, and engravings by Italian masters. Hebrew was studied a little, because Goethe the son had a fancy for it, partly with a view to theology and partly because there was a Jewish quarter, gloomy and sequestrated, in the city of Frankfort. French offered itself no doubt on many suggestions, but originally on occasion of a French theatre, supported by the staff of the French army when quartered in the same city. Latin was gathered in a random way from a daily sense of its necessity ; English upon the temptation of a stranger's advertisement, promising upon moderate terms to teach that language in four weeks—a proof, by the way, that the system of bold innovations in the art of tuition had already commenced. Riding and fencing were also attempted under masters apparently not very highly qualified, and in the same desultory style of application. Dancing was taught to his family, strange as it may seem, by Mr. Goethe himself. There is good reason to believe that not one of all these accomplishments was possessed by Goethe, when ready to visit the university, in a degree which made it practically of any use to him. Drawing and music were pursued confessedly as amusements ; and it would be difficult to mention any attainment whatsoever which Goethe had carried to a point of excellence in the years which he had

spent under his father's care, unless it were his mastery over the common artifices of metre and the common topics of rhetoric, which fitted him for writing what are called occasional poems and *impromptus.* This talent he possessed in a remarkable degree, and at an early age ; but he owed its cultivation entirely to himself.

In a city so orderly as Frankfort, and in a station privileged from all the common hardships of poverty, it can hardly be expected that many incidents should arise, of much separate importance in themselves, to break the monotony of life ; and the mind of Goethe was not contemplative enough to create a value for common occurrences through any peculiar impressions which he had derived from them. In the years 1763 and 1764, when he must have been from fourteen to fifteen years old, Goethe witnessed the inauguration and coronation of a king of the Romans, a solemn spectacle connected by prescription with the city of Frankfort. He describes it circumstantially, but with very little feeling, in his Memoirs. Probably the prevailing sentiment, on looking back at least to this transitory splendour of dress, processions, and ceremonial forms, was one of cynical contempt ; but this he could not express, as a person closely connected with a German Court, without giving much and various offence. It is with some timidity even that he hazards a criticism upon single parts of the costume adopted by some of the actors in that gorgeous scene. White silk stockings and pumps of the common form he objects to as out of harmony with the antique and heraldic aspects of the

general costume, and ventures to suggest either boots or sandals as an improvement. Had Goethe felt himself at liberty from all restraints of private consideration in composing these Memoirs, can it be doubted that he would have taken his retrospect of this Frankfort inauguration from a different station; from the station of that stern revolution which, within his own time and partly under his own eyes, had shattered the whole imperial system of thrones, in whose equipage this gay pageant made so principal a figure, had humbled Cæsar himself to the dust, and left him an emperor without an empire. We at least, for our parts, could not read without some emotion one little incident of these gorgeous scenes recorded by Goethe—namely, that when the emperor, on rejoining his wife for a few moments, held up to her notice his own hands and arms arrayed in the antique habiliments of Charlemagne, Maria Theresa —she whose children were summoned to so sad a share in the coming changes—gave way to sudden bursts of loud laughter, audible to the whole populace below her. That laugh on surveying the departing pomps of Charlemagne must, in any contemplative ear, have rung with a sound of deep significance, and with something of the same effect which belongs to a figure of Death introduced by a painter as mixing in the festal dances of a bridal assembly.

These pageants of 1763–64 occupy a considerable space in Goethe's Memoirs, and with some *logical* propriety at least, in consideration of their being exclusively attached to Frankfort, and connected by manifold links of person and office with the privileged

character of the city. Perhaps he might feel a sort of narrow local patriotism in recalling these scenes to public notice by description, at a time when they had been irretrievably extinguished as realities. But, after making every allowance for their local value to a Frankfort family, and for their memorable splendour, we may venture to suppose that by far the most impressive remembrances which had gathered about the boyhood of Goethe were those which pointed to Frederick of Prussia. This singular man, so imbecile as a pretender to philosophy and new lights, so truly heroic under misfortunes, was the first German who created a German interest, and gave a transient unity to the German name under all its multiplied divisions. Were it only for this conquest of difficulties so peculiar, he would deserve his German designation of Fred the Unique (*Fritz der einzige*). He had been partially tried and known previously, but it was the Seven Years' War which made him the popular idol. This began in 1756, and to Frankfort in a very peculiar way that war brought dissensions and heartburnings in its train. The imperial connections of the city with many public and private interests pledged it to the anti-Prussian cause. It happened also that the truly German character of the reigning imperial family, the domestic habits of the empress and her young daughters, and other circumstances, were of a nature to endear the ties of policy: self-interest and affection pointed in the same direction. And yet were all these considerations allowed to melt away before the brilliant qualities of one man, and the romantic enthusiasm kindled by his victories.

Frankfort was divided within herself: the young and the generous were all dedicated to Frederick; a smaller party, more cautious and prudent, were for the imperialists. Families were divided upon this question against families, and often against themselves; feuds, begun in private, issued often into public violence; and, according to Goethe's own illustration, the streets were vexed by daily brawls, as hot and as personal as of old between the Capulets and Montagues.

These dissensions, however, were pursued with not much personal risk to any of the Goethes, until a French army passed the Rhine as allies of the imperialists. One corps of this force took up their quarters in Frankfort; and the Comte Thorane, who held a high appointment on the staff, settled himself for a long period of time in the spacious mansion of Goethe's father. This officer, whom his place made responsible for the discipline of the army in relation to the citizens, was naturally by temper disposed to moderation and forbearance. He was indeed a favourable specimen of French military officers under the old system—well-bred, not arrogant, well-informed, and a friend of the fine arts. For painting, in particular, he professed great regard and some knowledge. The Goethes were able to forward his views amongst German artists; whilst, on the other hand, they were pleased to have thus an opportunity of directing his patronage towards some of their own needy connections. In this exchange of good offices the two parties were for some time able to maintain a fair appearance of reciprocal good-will. This on

the Comte's side, if not particularly warm, was probably sincere ; but in Goethe the father it was a mask for inveterate dislike. A natural ground of this existed in the original relations between them. Under whatever disguise or pretext, the Frenchman was in fact a military intruder. He occupied the best suite of rooms in the house, used the furniture as his own, and though upon private motives he abstained from doing all the injury which his situation authorized (so as, in particular, 'to have spread his fine military maps upon the floor, rather than disfigure the decorated walls by nails), still he claimed credit, if not services of requital, for all such instances of forbearance. Here were grievances enough ; but in addition to these the Comte's official appointments drew upon him a weight of daily business which kept the house in a continual uproar. Farewell to the quiet of a literary amateur and the orderliness of a German household. Finally, the Comte was a Frenchman. These were too many assaults upon one man's patience. It will be readily understood, therefore, how it happened that, whilst Goethe's gentle-minded mother, with her flock of children, continued to be on the best terms with Comte Thorane, the master of the house kept moodily aloof and retreated from all intercourse.

Goethe, in his own Memoir, enters into large details upon this subject ; and from him we shall borrow the *dénouement* of the tale. A crisis had for some time been lowering over the French affairs in Frankfort ; things seemed ripening for a battle, and at last it came. Flight, siege, bombardment, possibly a

storm, all danced before the eyes of the terrified citizens. Fortunately, however, the battle took place at the distance of four or five miles from Frankfort. Monsieur le Comte was absent, of course, on the field of battle. His unwilling host thought that on such an occasion he also might go out in quality of spectator, and with this purpose he connected another worthy of a Parson Adams. It is his son who tells the story, whose filial duty was not proof against his sense of the ludicrous. The old gentleman's hatred of the French had by this time brought him over to his son's admiration of the Prussian hero. Not doubting for an instant that victory would follow that standard, he resolved on this day to offer in person his congratulations to the Prussian army, whom he already viewed as his liberator from a domestic nuisance. So purposing, he made his way cautiously to the suburbs; from the suburbs, still listening at each advance, he went forward to the country, totally forgetting, as his son insists, that however completely beaten, the French army must still occupy some situation or other between himself and his German deliverer. Coming, however, at length to a heath, he found some of those marauders usually to be met with in the rear of armies prowling about, and at intervals amusing themselves with shooting at a mark. For want of a better it seemed not improbable that a large German head might answer their purpose. Certain signs admonished him of this, and the old gentleman crept back to Frankfort. Not many hours after came back also the Comte—by no means creeping, however; on the contrary, crowing with all his might

for a victory which he averred himself to have won. There had in fact been an affair, but on no very great scale and with no distinguished results. Some prisoners, however, he brought, together with some wounded, and naturally he expected all well-disposed persons to make their compliments of congratulation upon his triumph. Of this duty poor Mrs. Goethe and her children cheerfully acquitted themselves that same night, and Monsieur le Comte was so well pleased with the sound opinions of the little Goethes that he sent them in return a collection of sweetmeats and fruits. All promised to go well. Intentions, after all, are not acts, and there certainly is not, nor ever was, any treason in taking a morning's walk. But, as ill-luck would have it, just as Mr. Goethe was passing the Comte's door, out came the Comte in person, purely by accident as we are told; but we suspect that the surly old German, either under his morning hopes or his evening disappointments, had talked with more frankness than prudence. "Good evening to you, Herr Goethe," said the Comte; "you are come, I see, to pay your tribute of congratulation. Somewhat of the latest to be sure; but no matter." "By no means," replied the German; "by no means; *mit nichten.* Heartily I wished the whole day long that you and your cursed gang might all go to the devil together." Here was plain speaking at least. The Comte Thorane could no longer complain of dissimulation. His first movement was to order an arrest, and the official interpreter of the French army took to himself the whole credit that he did not carry it into

effect. Goethe takes the trouble to report a dialogue, of length and dulness absolutely incredible, between this interpreter and the Comte. No such dialogue, we may be assured, ever took place. Goethe may, however, be right in supposing that, amongst a foreign soldiery irritated by the pointed contrasts between the Frankfort treatment of their own wounded and of their prisoners who happened to be in the same circumstances, and under a military council not held to any rigorous responsibility, his father might have found no very favourable consideration of his case. It is well, therefore, that after some struggle the Comte's better nature triumphed. He suffered Mrs. Goethe's merits to outweigh her husband's delinquency, countermanded the order for arrest, and during the remainder of their connection kept at such a distance from his moody host as was equally desirable for both. Fortunately that remainder was not very long. Comte Thorane was soon displaced, and the whole army was soon afterwards withdrawn from Frankfort.

In his fifteenth year Goethe was entangled in some connection with young people of inferior rank, amongst whom was Margaret, a young girl about two years older than himself, and the object of his first love. The whole affair, as told by Goethe, is somewhat mysterious. What might be the final views of the elder parties it is difficult to say, but Goethe assures us that they used his services only in writing an occasional epithalamium, the pecuniary acknowledgment for which was spent jovially in a general banquet The magistrates, however, interfered, and

endeavoured to extort a confession from Goethe; he, as the son of a respectable family, was to be pardoned, the others to be punished. No confession, however, could be extorted, and for his own part he declares that, beyond the offence of forming a clandestine connection, he had nothing to confess. The affair terminated as regarded himself in a severe illness. Of the others we hear no more.

The next event of importance in Goethe's life was his removal to college. His own wishes pointed to Göttingen, but his father preferred Leipsic. Thither accordingly he went, but he carried his obedience no farther. Declining the study of jurisprudence, he attached himself to general literature. Subsequently he removed to the university of Strasbourg; but in neither place could it be said that he pursued any regular course of study. His health suffered at times during this period of his life: at first from an affection of the chest, caused by an accident on his first journey to Leipsic—the carriage had stuck fast in the muddy roads, and Goethe exerted himself too much in assisting to extricate the wheels. A second illness, connected with the digestive organs, brought him into considerable danger.

After his return to Frankfort Goethe commenced his career as an author. In 1773 and the following year he made his maiden essay in "Goetz of Berlichingen," a drama (the translation of which, remarkably enough, was destined to be the literary *coup d'essai* of Sir Walter Scott), and in the far-famed "Werther." The first of these was pirated, and in consequence the author found some difficulty in pay-

ing for the paper of the genuine edition, which part of the expense, by his contract with the publisher, fell upon himself. The general and early popularity of the second work is well known. Yet, except in so far as it might spread his name abroad, it cannot be supposed to have had much influence in attracting that potent patronage which now began to determine the course of his future life. So much we collect from the account which Goethe himself has left us of this affair in its earliest stages.

"I was sitting alone in my room," says he, "at my father's house in Frankfort, when a gentleman entered whom at first I took for Frederick Jacobi, but soon discovered by the dubious light to be a stranger. He had a military air, and announcing himself by the name of Von Knebel, gave me to understand in a short explanation, that, being in the Prussian service, he had connected himself, during a long residence at Berlin and Potsdam, with the *literati* of those places, but that at present he held the appointment from the Court of Weimar of travelling tutor to the Prince Constantine. This I heard with pleasure, for many of our friends had brought us the most interesting accounts from Weimar, in particular that the Duchess Amelia, mother of the young Grand Duke and his brother, summoned to her assistance in educating her sons the most distinguished men in Germany, and that the university of Jena co-operated powerfully in all her liberal plans. I was aware also that Wieland was in high favour, and that the 'German Mercury' (a literary journal of eminence) was itself highly creditable to the city of Jena, from

which it issued. A beautiful and well-conducted theatre had, besides, as I knew, been lately established at Weimar. This, it was true, had been destroyed, but that event, under common circumstances so likely to be fatal as respected the present, had served only to call forth the general expression of confidence in the young prince as a restorer and upholder of all great interests, and true to his purposes under any calamity." Thinking thus, and thus prepossessed in favour of Weimar, it was natural that Goethe should be eager to see the prince. Nothing was easier. It happened that he and his brother Constantine were at this moment at Frankfort, and Von Knebel willingly offered to present Goethe. No sooner said than done. They repaired to the hotel, where they found the illustrious travellers, with Count Goertz, the tutor of the elder.

Upon this occasion an accident, rather than any previous reputation of Goethe, was probably the determining occasion which led to his favour with the future sovereign of Weimar. A new book lay upon the table; that none of the strangers had read it Goethe inferred from observing that the leaves were as yet uncut. It was a work of Moser ("Patriotische Phantasien"), and being political rather than literary in its topics, it presented to Goethe, previously aquainted with its outline, an opportunity for conversing with the prince upon subjects nearest to his heart, and of showing that he was not himself a mere studious recluse. The opportunity was not lost; the prince and his tutor were much interested, and perhaps a little surprised. Such subjects have

the further advantage, according to Goethe's own illustration, that, like the Arabian thousand and one nights as conducted by the Sultana Scheherezade, "never ending, still beginning," they rarely come to any absolute close, but so interweave one into another as still to leave behind a large arrear of interest. In order to pursue the conversation, Goethe was invited to meet them soon after at Mentz. He kept the appointment punctually, made himself even more agreeable, and finally received a formal invitation to enter the service of this excellent prince, who was now beginning to collect around him all those persons who have since made Weimar so distinguished a name in connection with the German literature. With some opposition from his father, who held up the rupture between Voltaire and Frederick of Prussia as a precedent applying to all possible connections of princes and *literati*, Goethe accepted the invitation; and henceforwards, for upwards of fifty-five years, his fortunes were bound up with those of the ducal house of Weimar.

The noble part which that house played in the great modern drama of German politics is well known, and would have been better known had its power been greater. But the moral value of its sacrifices and its risks is not the less. Had greater potentates shown equal firmness, Germany would not have been laid at the feet of Napoleon. In 1806 the Grand Duke was aware of the peril which awaited the allies of Prussia, but neither his heart nor his conscience would allow of his deserting a friend in whose army he held a principal command.

The decisive battle took place in his own territory, and not far from his own palace and city of Weimar. Personally he was with the Prussian army, but his excellent consort stayed in the palace to encourage her subjects, and as far as possible to conciliate the enemy by her presence. The fortune of that great day, the 14th of October 1806, was decided early, and the awful event was announced by a hot retreat and a murderous pursuit through the streets of the town. In the evening Napoleon arrived in person; and now came the trying moment. "The Duchess," says an Englishman well acquainted with Weimar and its Court, "placed herself on the top of the staircase to greet him with the formality of a courtly reception. Napoleon started when he beheld her: '*Qui êtes vous?*' he exclaimed, with characteristic abruptness. '*Je suis la Duchesse de Weimar.*' '*Je vous plains,*' he retorted fiercely. '*J'écraserai votre mari.*' He then added, 'I shall dine in my apartment,' and rushed by her. The night was spent on the part of the soldiery in all the horrid excesses of rapine. In the morning the Duchess sent to inquire concerning the health of his Majesty the Emperor, and to solicit an audience. He, who had now benefited by his dreams or by his reflections, returned a gracious answer, and invited himself to breakfast with her in her apartment." In the conversation which ensued Napoleon asked her if her husband were mad, upon which she justified the Duke by appealing to his own magnanimity, asking in her turn if his Majesty would have approved of his deserting the King of Prussia at the moment

when he was attacked by so potent a monarch as himself. The rest of the conversation was in the same spirit, uniting with a sufficient concession to the circumstances of the moment a dignified vindication of a high-minded policy. Napoleon was deeply impressed with respect for her, and loudly expressed it. For her sake, indeed, he even affected to pardon her husband, thus making a merit with her of the necessity which he felt from other motives for showing forbearance towards a family so nearly allied to that of St. Petersburg. In 1813 the Grand Duke was found at his post in that great gathering of the nations which took place on the stupendous fields of Leipsic, and was complimented by the allied sovereigns as one of the most faithful amongst the faithful to the great cause, yet undecided, of national independence.

With respect to Goethe, as a councillor so near the Duke's person, it may be supposed that his presence was never wanting where it promised to be useful. In the earlier campaigns of the Duke Goethe was his companion, but in the final contest with Napoleon he was unequal to the fatigues of such a post. In all the functions of peace, however, he continued to be a useful servant to the last, though long released from all official duties. Each had indeed most honourably earned the gratitude of the other. Goethe had surrendered the flower of his years and the best energies of his mind to the service of his Serene master. On the other hand, that master had to him been at once his Augustus and his Mæcenas; such is his own expression.

Under him he had founded a family, raised an estate, obtained titles and decorations from various Courts ; and in the very vigour of his life he had been allowed to retire, with all the honours of long service, to the sanctuary of his own study, and to the cultivation of his leisure, as the very highest mode in which he could further the public interest.

The life of Goethe was so quiet and so uniform after the year 1775, when he may first be said to have entered into active life by taking service with the Duke of Weimar, that a biographer will find hardly any event to notice, except two journeys to Italy and one campaign in 1792, until he draws near the close of his long career. It cannot interest an English reader to see the dates of his successive appointments. It is enough to know that they soon raised him to as high a station as was consistent with literary leisure, and that he had from the beginning enjoyed the unlimited confidence of his sovereign. Nothing remained, in fact, for the subject to desire which the prince had not previously volunteered. In 1825 they were able to look back upon a course of uninterrupted friendship, maintained through good and evil fortunes, unexampled in their agitation and interest for fifty years. The Duke commemorated this remarkable event by a jubilee and by a medal in honour of Goethe. Full of years and honour, this eminent man might now begin to think of his departure. However, his serenity continued unbroken nearly for two years more, when his illustrious patron died. That shock was the first

which put his fortitude to trial. In 1830 others followed; the Duchess, who had won so much admiration from Napoleon, died; then followed his own son, and there remained little now to connect his wishes with the earth. The family of his patron he had lived to see flourishing in his descendants to the fourth generation. His own grandchildren were prosperous and happy. His intellectual labours were now accomplished. All that remained to wish for was a gentle dismission. This he found in the spring of 1832. After a six days' illness, which caused him no apparent suffering, on the morning of the 22nd of March he breathed away as if into a gentle sleep, surrounded by his daughter-in-law and her children. Never was a death more in harmony with the life it closed: both had the same character of deep and absolute serenity.

Such is the outline of Goethe's life, traced through its principal events. But as these events, after all, borrow their interest mainly from the consideration allowed to Goethe as an author, and as a model in the German literature—*that* being the centre about which all secondary feelings of interest in the man must finally revolve—it thus becomes a duty to throw a glance over his principal works. Dismissing his songs, to which has been ascribed by some crtics a very high value for their variety and their lyrical enthusiasm; dismissing also a large body of short miscellaneous poems, suited to the occasional circumstances in which they arose; we may throw the capital works of Goethe into two classes—philosophic novels and dramas. The novels, which we call

philosophic by way of expressing their main characteristic in being written to serve a preconceived purpose, or to embody some peculiar views of life or some aspects of philosophic truth, are three, viz., the "Werther's Leiden;" secondly, the "Wilhelm Meister;" and lastly, the "Wahloer-wandschaften." The first two exist in English translations; and though the "Werther" had the disadvantage of coming to us through a French version, already perhaps somewhat coloured and distorted to meet the Parisian standards of sentiment, yet, as respects Goethe and his reputation amongst us, this wrong has been redressed, or compensated at least, by the good fortune of his "Wilhelm Meister," in falling into the hands of a translator whose original genius qualified him for sympathising even to excess with any real merits in that work. This novel is in its own nature and purpose sufficiently obscure, and the commentaries which have been written upon it by the Humboldts, Schlegels, &c., make the enigma still more enigmatical. We shall not venture abroad upon an ocean of discussion so truly dark, and at the same time so illimitable. Whether it be qualified to excite any deep and *sincere* feeling of one kind or another in the German mind—in a mind trained under German discipline—this we will consent to waive as a question not immediately interesting to ourselves. Enough that it has not gained, and will not gain, any attention in this country; and this not only because it is thoroughly deficient in all points of attraction to readers formed upon our English literature, but because in some capital circumstances

it is absolutely repulsive. We do not wish to offend the admirers of Goethe; but the simplicity of truth will not allow us to conceal that in various points of description or illustration, and sometimes in the very outline of the story, the "Wilhelm Meister" is at open war, not with decorum and good taste merely, but with moral purity and the dignity of human nature. As a novelist, Goethe and his reputation are problems, and likely to continue such, to the countrymen of Mrs. Inchbald, Miss Harriet Lee, Miss Edgeworth, and Sir Walter Scott. To the dramatic works of Goethe we are disposed to pay more homage; but neither in the absolute amount of our homage at all professing to approach his public admirers, nor to distribute the proportions of this homage amongst his several performances according to the graduations of *their* scale. The "Iphigenie" is built upon the old subject of Iphigenia in Tauris, as treated by Euripides and other Grecian dramatists; and, if we are to believe a Schlegel, it is in beauty and effect a mere echo or reverberation from the finest strains of the old Grecian music. That it is somewhat nearer to the Greek model than a play after the fashion of Racine we grant. Setting aside such faithful transcripts from the antique as the "Samson Agonistes," we might consent to view Goethe as that one amongst the moderns who had made the closest approximation to the Greek stage: *Proximus*, we might say with Quintilian, but with him we must add *sed longo intervallo;* and if in the second rank, yet nearer to the third than to the first. Two other dramas, the "Clavigo" and the "Egmont," fall below

the "Iphigenie" by the very character of their pretensions; the first as too openly renouncing the grandeurs of the ideal, the second as confessedly violating the historic truth of character without temptation to do so, and without any consequent indemnification. The "Tasso" has been supposed to realise an Italian beauty of genial warmth and of sunny repose; but from the common defect of German criticism—the absence of all sufficient illustrations—it is as difficult to understand the true nature and constituents of the supposed Italian standard set up for the regulation of our judgments, as it is to measure the degree of approach made to that standard in this particular work. "Eugenie" is celebrated for the artificial burnish of the style, but otherwise has been little relished. It has the beauty of marble sculpture, say the critics of Goethe, but also the coldness. We are not often disposed to quarrel with these critics as *below* the truth in their praise; in this instance we are. The "Eugenie" is a fragment, or (as Goethe himself called it in conversation) a *torso*, being only the first drama in a trilogy, or series of three dramas, each having a separate plot, whilst all are parts of a more general and comprehensive plan. It may be charged with languor in the movement of the action, and with excess of illustration. Thus, *e.g.*, the grief of the prince for the supposed death of his daughter, is the monotonous topic which occupies one entire act. But the situations, though not those of *scenical* distress, are so far from being unexciting, that, on the contrary, they are too powerfully afflicting.

The lustre of all these performances, however, is eclipsed by the unrivalled celebrity amongst German critics of the "Faust." Upon this it is better to say nothing than too little. How trifling an advance has been made towards clearing the ground for any sane criticism may be understood from this fact, that as yet no two people have agreed about the meaning of any separate scene, or about the drift of the whole. Neither is this explained by saying that until lately the "Faust" was a fragment; for no additional light has dawned upon the main question since the publication of the latter part.

One work there is of Goethe's which falls into neither of the classes here noticed: we mean the "Hermann and Dorothea," a narrative poem in hexameter verse. This appears to have given more pleasure to readers not critical than any other work of its author; and it is remarkable that it traverses humbler ground, as respects both its subject, its characters, and its scenery. From this and other indications of the same kind we are disposed to infer that Goethe mistook his destination, that his aspiring nature misled him, and that his success would have been greater had he confined himself to the *real* in domestic life, without raising his eyes to the *ideal*.

We must also mention that Goethe threw out some novel speculations in physical science, and particularly in physiology, in the doctrine of colours, and in comparative anatomy, which have divided the opinions of critics even more than any of those questions which have arisen upon points more

directly connected with his avowed character of poet.

It now remains to say a few words by way of summing up his pretensions as a man, and his intellectual power in the age to which he belonged. His rank and value as a moral being are so plain as to be legible to him who runs. Everybody must feel that his temperament and constitutional tendency was of that happy quality, the animal so nicely balanced with the intellectual, that with any ordinary measure of prosperity he could not be otherwise than a good man. He speaks himself of his own "virtue," *sans phrase;* and we tax him with no vanity in doing so. As a young man even at the universities, which at that time were barbarously sensual in Germany, he was (for so much we collect from his own Memoirs) eminently capable of self-restraint. He preserves a tone of gravity, of sincerity, of respect for female dignity, which we never find associated with the levity and recklessness of vice. We feel throughout the presence of one who, in respecting others, respects himself; and the cheerfulness of the presiding tone persuades us at once that the narrator is in a healthy moral condition, fears no ill, and is conscious of having meditated none. Yet at the same time we cannot disguise from ourselves that the moral temperament of Goethe was one which demanded prosperity: had he been called to face great afflictions, singular temptations, or a billowy and agitated course of life, our belief is that his nature would have been found unequal to the strife; he would have repeated the

mixed and moody character of his father. Sunny prosperity was essential to his nature ; his virtues were adapted to that condition. And happily that was his fate. He had no personal misfortunes, his path was joyous in this life, and even the reflex sorrow from the calamities of his friends did not press too heavily on his sympathies ; none of these were in excess either as to degree or duration.

In this estimate of Goethe as a moral being few people will differ with us, unless it were the religious bigot. And to him we must concede thus much, that Goethe was not that religious creature which by nature he was intended to become. This is to be regretted : Goethe was naturally pious and reverential towards higher natures ; and it was in the mere levity or wantonness of youthful power, partly also through that early false bias growing out of the Lisbon earthquake, that he falsified his original destination. Do we mean, then, that a childish error could permanently master his understanding ? Not so ; *that* would have been corrected with his growing strength. But having once arisen, it must for a long time have moulded his feelings ; *until* corrected, it must have impressed a corresponding false bias upon his practical way of viewing things ; and that sort of false bias once established, might long survive a mere error of the understanding. One thing is undeniable. Goethe had so far corrupted and clouded his natural mind that he did not look up to God, or the system of things beyond the grave, with the interest of reverence and awe, but with the interest of curiosity.

Goethe, however, in a moral estimate, will be viewed pretty uniformly ; but Goethe intellectually, Goethe as a power acting upon the age in which he lived, that is another question. Let us put a case. Suppose that Goethe's death had occurred fifty years ago—that is, in the year 1785 ; what would have been the general impression ? Would Europe have felt a shock? Would Europe have been sensible even of the event ? Not at all : it would have been obscurely noticed in the newspapers of Germany as the death of a novelist who had produced some effect about ten years before. In 1832 it was announced by the post-horns of all Europe as the death of him who had written the "Wilhelm Meister," the "Iphigenie," and the "Faust," and who had been enthroned by some of his admirers on the same seat with Homer and Shakspeare, as composing what they termed the *trinity of men of genius*. And yet it is a fact, that in the opinion of some amongst the acknowledged leaders of our own literature for the last twenty-five years the "Werther" was superior to all which followed it, and for mere power was the paramount work of Goethe. For ourselves we must acknowledge our assent upon the whole to this verdict ; and at the same time we will avow our belief that the reputation of Goethe must decline for the next generation or two, until it reaches its just level. Three causes we are persuaded have concurred to push it so far beyond the proportion of real and genuine interest attached to his works, for in Germany his works are little read, and in this country not at all. *First*, his extra-

ordinary age : for the last twenty years Goethe had been the patriarch of the German literature. *Secondly*, the splendour of his official rank at the Court of Weimar : he was the minister and private friend of the patriot sovereign amongst the princes of Germany. *Thirdly*, the quantity of enigmatical and unintelligible writing which he has designedly thrown into his latter works, by way of keeping up a system of discussion and strife upon his own meaning amongst the critics of his country. These disputes, had his meaning been of any value in his own eyes, he would naturally have settled by a few authoritative words from himself ; but it was his policy to keep alive the feud in a case where it was of importance that his name should continue to agitate the world, but of none at all that he should be rightly interpreted.

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO.
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

PRICE 3s. 6d. each.

THE NEW KNEBWORTH EDITION OF

THE NOVELS AND ROMANCES OF EDWARD, LORD LYTTON.

In 29 Volumes, crown 8vo., cloth. With Bibliography and Introduction.

List of the Series.

Pelham
Falkland and Zicci
Devereux
The Disowned
Paul Clifford
Eugene Aram
Godolphin
The Last Days of Pompeii
Rienzi
The Last of the Barons. *Vol.* 1
The Last of the Barons. *Vol.* 2
Leila, Calderon and Pausanias
Harold
A Strange Story
Zanoni
The Pilgrims of the Rhine, and The Haunted and Haunters
Ernest Maltravers
Alice
Lucretia
Night and Morning
Kenelm Chillingly
The Parisians. *Vol.* 1
The Parisians. *Vol.* 2. The Coming Race
The Caxtons
My Novel. *Vol.* 1
My Novel. *Vol.* 2
My Novel. *Vol.* 3
What will He do with It? *Vol* 1
What will He do with It? *Vol.* 2

"In the highest qualities acquired in the delineation of the secret feelings that dwell in the recesses of the heart, Bulwer Lytton stands pre-eminent, and entitled to a place beside Scott himself, at the very head of the prose writers of works of imagination in our country."—*From Alison's "History of Europe."*

THE "KING'S OWN" EDITION OF

CAPTAIN MARRYAT'S NOVELS.

In 19 *Volumes, Crown* 8*vo., cloth, price* £3 6s. 6d. ; *or in separate Volumes, price* 3s. 6d. *each, with original Illustrations drawn specially for this Edition by* W. H. OVEREND, FREDERICK BARNARD, E. J. WHEELER, *and* F. W. HAYES, A.R.C.A., *reproduced in the highest style of Photogravure by* LEMERCIER, *of Paris. With Introductions to each Volume by* W. L. COURTNEY, LL.D.

List of the Series.

The King's Own

Frank Mildmay ; or, The Naval Officer

Newton Forster

Peter Simple

Jacob Faithful

The Pacha of Many Tales

Japhet in Search of a Father

Mr. Midshipman Easy

The Pirate ; and The Three Cutters

The Dog Fiend

Rattlin the Reefer. Edited by Captain Marryat

The Phantom Ship

Olla Podrida

Poor Jack

The Poacher

Percival Keene

Monsieur Violet

The Privateersman

Valerie ; An Autobiography

A Large Paper Edition of these Novels, limited to 125 *Numbered Copies, is also ready, price* £9 19s. 6d. *the Set, net.*

"Captain Marryat stands second in merit to no novelist but Miss Edgeworth. His strong sense and utter superiority to affectation of all sorts command respect ; and in his quiet effectiveness of circumstantial narrative he sometimes approaches Defoe."—J. G. LOCKHART.

THE NOTRE-DAME EDITION OF

VICTOR HUGO'S NOVELS.

PRINTED FROM NEW PLATES.

In 14 *Volumes, crown* 8*vo., cloth, price* £2 9s. ; *or in separate Volumes, price* 3*s.* 6*d. each.*

List of the Series.

Notre-Dame de Paris
In Two Volumes

The Toilers of the Sea
In Two Volumes

Les Misérables
In Five Volumes

Ninety-Three
In One Volume

The Man who Laughs
In Two Volumes

Hans of Iceland
In One Volume

The Last Days of a Condemned ; Bug - Jargal ; and Claude Grieux
In One Volume

The volumes included in this series are the greatest works of this great writer.

THE D'ARTAGNAN EDITION OF

ALEXANDRE DUMAS' NOVELS.

PRINTED FROM NEW PLATES.

In 9 *Volumes, crown* 8*vo., cloth, price* £1 11s. 6d. ; *or in separate Volumes, price* 3s. 6d. *each.*

List of the Series.

The Three Musketeers
In Two Volumes

Twenty Years After
In Two Volumes

Vicomte de Bragelonne
In Five Volumes

"Dumas is neither so witty as Dickens nor so ingenious as Defoe or Swift, nor so elegant as Thackeray, but he bears them all down before the incomparable flow of his personality. Probably that is the reason why the passion for Dumas is as strong as ever."—*Daily Chronicle.*

PRICE 3s. 6d. each.

THE NEW EDITION OF

FIELDING'S AND SMOLLETT'S NOVELS.

Reset from New Type.

List of the Series.

Fielding.—

Tom Jones
Joseph Andrews
Amelia

"The prose Homer of human nature."
—BYRON.

Smollett.—

Roderick Random
Humphry Clinker
Peregrine Pickle

"A perpetual fount of sparklin
laughter."—THACKERAY.

SCOTT'S (SIR WALTER) NOVELS.

A New Edition, with the Author's Notes, and the original Steel Plates by GEOR
CRUIKSHANK, J. M. W. TURNER, *and others, red cloth.*

Waverley
Guy Mannering
Old Mortality
Heart of Midlothian
Rob Roy
The Antiquary
Bride of Lammermoor
Ivanhoe
The Monastery
The Abbot
The Pirate
Fortunes of Nigel

Peveril of the Peak
Quentin Durward
St. Ronan's Well
Redgauntlet
Betrothed, and Highlan
Widow
The Talisman, and Tw
Woodstock [Drover
Fair Maid of Perth
Anne of Geierstein
Count Robert of Paris
Surgeon s Daughter

Smedley, Frank E.—

Frank Fairlegh

Harry Coverdale's Courtship

Sue, Eugene.—The Mysteries of Paris

THE STANDARD NOVELISTS.

The Best Novels of the Best Standard Novelists. Printed from new type, with full-page Illustrations, crown 8vo., cloth, gilt top, 3s. 6d. *each.*

Smollett.—
Peregrine Pickle

Fielding.—
Tom Jones

Dumas.—
Monte Cristo

Scott.—
Ivanhoe

Hugo.—
Notre Dame

Dickens.—
David Copperfield

Cooper.—
The Last of the Mohicans

Lytton.—
The Last Days of Pompeii

Ainsworth.—
The Tower of London

Lover.—
Handy Andy

Marryat.—
The King's Own

Thackeray.—
Vanity Fair

Cockton.—
Valentine Vox

UNABRIDGED NOVELS.

Les Misérables. By VICTOR HUGO. Complete Edition. With Illustrations. 1,500 pages. Reset from New Type.

Notre Dame. By VICTOR HUGO. Complete Edition. With Illustrations.

The Three Musketeers. By ALEXANDRE DUMAS. Complete Edition. With Illustrations by M. LELOIR.

Uncle Remus and Nights with Uncle Remus. Complete Edition. With many Illustrations.

Twenty Years After. By ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

Toilers of the Sea. By VICTOR HUGO.

The Tower of London. By W. HARRISON AINSWORTH. With 20 Plates by GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.

STANDARD NOVELS.

With full-page Illustrations, crown 8vo., cloth, price **3s. 6d.** *each.*

Ainsworth's Novels.—

St. James's. With Steel Plates by CRUIKSHANK.
Crichton. Plates by H. K. BROWNE.
Mervyn Clitheroe. Plates by H. K. BROWNE.
Boscobel. Plates by H. K. BROWNE.
Ovingdean Grange. Plates by H. K. BROWNE.
The Miser's Daughter. With Steel Plates by CRUIKSHANK.
The Flitch of Bacon. With Illustrations by Sir JOHN GILBERT.
Preston Fight. Illustrated by FREDERICK GILBERT.
The Leaguer of Lathom. Illustrated by FREDERICK GILBERT.
Auriol. Illustrated by H. K. BROWNE.
Stanley Brereton. Illustrated by F. GILBERT.

Cooper's Novels.—

The Deerslayer
Last of the Mohicans
The Pathfinder
The Pioneers
The Prairie

The Leather-stocking Tales in the Order of the Sequels.

Cooper's Novels—*continued.*

The Red Rover
The Pilot
The Two Admirals
The Waterwitch
The Sea Lions
The Spy
Miles Wallingford. (Sequel to "Afloat and Ashore.")
Lionel Lincoln
The Headsman
Homeward Bound
The Crater; or, Vulcan's Peak. (Mark's Reef.)
Wing and Wing
Jack Tier
Satanstoe. *Littlepage* MS. *Vol.* 1
The Chainbearer „ MS. *Vol.* 2
The Red Skins „ MS. *Vol.* 3
The Heidenmauer
Precaution
The Monikins
The Ways of the Hour
Mercedes of Castille
Wyandotte
Afloat and Ashore
Home as Found; or, Eve Effingham (Sequel to "Homeward Bound.")
The Oak Openings

STANDARD NOVELS—*continued.*

Dumas' Novels.—

Count of Monte Cristo. *Complete.*
The Three Musketeers
Twenty Years After [*Vol.* 1
The Vicomte de Bragelonne
" *Vol.* 2
The Forty-five Guardsmen
The Regent's Daughter
Memoirs of a Physician
The Queen's Necklace
The Taking of the Bastile
The Countess de Charny
The Chevalier de Maison Rouge

Hugo's (Victor) Novels.—

Uniform English Edition.

Illustrations by LUKE FILDES *and other Artists.*

By Order of the King
Toilers of the Sea
Notre Dame
Ninety-three
The History of a Crime
Things Seen

PRICE 2s. 6d. each.

LORD LYTTON'S NOVELS.

Crown 8vo., red cloth.

Lytton's (Lord) Novels.—

A Strange Story
Night and Morning
Paul Clifford
Kenelm Chillingly
Lucretia
Disowned
Harold
What will He do with It? *Vol.* 1

Lytton's (Lord) Novels—*continued.*

What will He do with It? *Vol.* 2
Ernest Maltravers
Alice (sequel to Ernest Maltravers)
Caxtons
Godolphin
My Novel. *Vol.* 1

LORD LYTTON'S NOVELS—*continued.*

Lytton's (Lord) Novels—*cont.*

My Novel. *Vol.* 2
Pelham
Devereux
Zanoni
Pausanias the Spartan
Falkland, and Zicci

Lytton's (Lord) Novels—*cont.*

The Coming Race
The Parisians. *Vol.* 1
The Parisians. *Vol.* 2
Leila, and the Pilgrims of the Rhine
Rienzi

MEDIUM 8VO. NOVELS.

Cloth, price 2s. 6d. *each.*

Dumas' Monte Cristo, The Three Musketeers, and Twenty Years After. In One Volume.

Sue's Mysteries of Paris, and The Wandering Jew. In One Volume.

Lytton's The Caxtons, My Novel, and What will He do with It? In One Volume.

HALF A CROWN NOVELS

Of the most popular authors. Well printed on good paper, and neatly bound in cloth.

Balzac, Honore De.—

The Two Brothers
The Alkahest
Modeste Mignon
The Magic Skin
Bureaucracy

Daudet, Alphonse.—

Tartarin of Tarascon
Kings in Exile
Thirty Years of Paris

Daudet, Alphonse—*continued.*

Recollections of a Literary Man
Robert Helmont
Artists' Wives.

Gould, Nat.—

The Double Event
Running it Off
Jockey Jack
Banker and Broker

HALF A CROWN NOVELS—*continued*

Gould, Nat—*continued.*

Harry Dale's Jockey
Thrown Away
Stuck Up
Only a Commoner
On and Off the Turf in Australia
The Miners' Cup
The Doctor's Double
The Magpie Jacket
Who Did It?
Horse or Blacksmith?
Not So Bad, After All
Seeing Him Through
A Lad of Mettle
A Gentleman Rider

Gunter, A. C.—

Mr. Potter of Texas
That Frenchman!
Miss Nobody of Nowhere
Miss Dividends
Baron Montez of Panama and Paris
A Princess of Paris
The King's Stockbroker
How I Escaped
Edited by A. C. GUNTER
The First of the English
The Ladies' Juggernaut
The Love Adventures of Al-Mansur
Edited by A. C. GUNTER
Her Senator
Don Balasco of Key West
Bob Covington

Gunter, A. C.—*continued.*

Susan Turnbull
Ballyho Bey
Billy Hamilton

Loti, Pierre.—

Madame Chrysanthème
With 199 Illustrations

Savage, R. H.—

My Official Wife
The Little Lady of Lagunitas
Prince Schamyl's Wooing
The Masked Venus
Delilah of Harlem
For Life and Love
The Anarchist
The Princess of Alaska
The Passing Show
The Flying Halcyon
A Daughter of Judas
In the Old Chateau
Miss Devereux of the Mariquita
His Cuban Sweetheart. By Col. SAVAGE and Mrs. A. C. GUNTER
For Her Life: a Romance of St. Petersburg
Checked Through
Her Foreign Conquest
Lost Countess Falka
An Exile from London
A Modern Corsair
A Fascinating Traitor
In the Shadow of the Pyramids

PRICE 2s. each.

ROUTLEDGE'S RAILWAY LIBRARY.

Bound in Fancy Boards.

Collins, Wilkie.—

Basil
Antonina
Hide and Seek

Daudet, Alphonse.—

With Illustrations.

Tartarin of Tarascon
Kings in Exile
Thirty Years of Paris
Recollections of a Literary Man
Artists' Wives
Robert Helmont

Grant, James.—

The Aide-de-Camp
The Scottish Cavalier
Jane Seton; or, The Queen's Advocate
Philip Rollo
Mary of Lorraine
Oliver Ellis; or, The Fusiliers
Lucy Arden; or, Hollywood Hall
Frank Hilton
Harry Ogilvie; or, The Black Dragoons

Grant, James—*continued.*

Cavaliers of Fortune
Second to None
The Constable of France
Phantom Regiment
The White Cockade
First Love and Last Love
Under the Red Dragon
The Queen's Cadet
Shall I Win Her?
Morley Ashton
Did She Love Him?
The Ross-shire Buffs
Six Years Ago
Vere of Ours
The Lord Hermitage
The Royal Regiment
Duke of Albany's Highlanders
The Dead Tryst
The Scots Brigade
Violet Jermyn; or, Tender and True
Jack Chaloner
Miss Cheyne of Essilmont
The Royal Highlanders
Colville of the Guards
Dulcie Carlyon
Derval Hampton
Scottish Soldiers of Fortune

ROUTLEDGE'S RAILWAY LIBRARY—*continued.*

Gunter, Archibald C.—

Mr. Potter of Texas
That Frenchman
Miss Nobody of Nowhere
Miss Dividends
Baron Montez of Panama and Paris
A Princess of Paris
The King's Stockbroker
How I Escaped. Edited by A. C. GUNTER.
The First of the English
The Ladies' Juggernaut
The Love Adventures of Al-Mansur. Edited by A. C. GUNTER
Her Senator
Don Balasco of Key West
Bob Covington
Susan Turnbull
Ballyho Bey
Billy Hamilton

Loti, Pierre.—

Madame Chrysanthème. With Illustrations

Rives, Amelie.—

The Quick or the Dead?
Virginia of Virginia
A Brother to Dragons

Savage, Colonel.—

My Official Wife
The Little Lady of Lagunitas

Savage, Colonel—*continued.*

Prince Schamyl's Wooing
The Masked Venus: A Story of Many Lands
Delilah of Harlem: A Story of New York
For Life and Love; A Story of the Rio Grande
The Anarchist: A Story of To-day
The Princess of Alaska
The Passing Show
The Flying Halcyon
A Daughter of Judas
In the Old Chateau
Miss Devereux of the Mariquita
His Cuban Sweetheart. By Col. SAVAGE and Mrs. A. C. GUNTER
For Her Life: A Romance of St. Petersburg
Checked Through
Her Foreign Conquest
Lost Countess Falka
An Exile from London
A Modern Corsair
A Fascinating Traitor
In the Shadow of the Pyramids

Smedley, Frank.—

Frank Fairlegh
Lewis Arundel
Harry Coverdale's Courtship

ROUTLEDGE'S RAILWAY LIBRARY—*continued.*

Various Authors.—

Whom to Marry.
With Cruikshank's Plates
MAYHEW

The Greatest Plague of Life
MAYHEW

False Colours.
ANNIE THOMAS

Through the Mist
Mrs. ADAMS-ACTON

Unspotted from the World

Bridget
M. BETHAM-EDWARDS

Jane Eyre
CHARLOTTE BRONTË

Can Such Things Be?
KEITH FLEMING

John Dorrien
JULIA KAVANAGH

The Prodigal Daughter
MARK HOPE

A Century's Sensations
W. SAPTE, Junr.

Loyal

Old London Bridge
G. H. RODWELL

A Complication in Hearts
EDMUND PENDLETON

Something Occurred
B. L. FARJEON

The Queen of Ecuador
R. M. MANLEY

The Mystery of Stephen Claverton and Co.
H. KNIGHT

Various Authors—*continued.*

A Hasty Marriage
Sir RANDAL H. ROBERTS, Bart.

A Son of Esau
MINNIE GILMORE

Poppæa
JULIEN GORDON

Rough Mischance
BRADNOCK HALL

Ladies First
Mrs. DOMINIQUE FRANÇOIS VERDENAL

A Sawdust Doll
Mrs. REGINALD DE KOVEN

Two Women and a Fool
H. C. CHATFIELD-TAYLOR

The Woman who Stood Between
MINNIE GILMORE

Crowned with Fennel
L. M. PROCTER

The Postmaster of Market Deignton
E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

That Girl from Bogota
CLARICE IRENE CLINGH

Tales of the Old Régime
PRICE WARUM

A Frisky Matron
PERCY LYSLE

Since First I Saw Your Face
Mrs. KER-SEYMER